Analysing foreign policy

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An introduction to some conceptual problems

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Routledge & Kegan Paul London

First published 1970
by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd
Broadway House, 68–74 Carter Lane
London, E.C.4

Printed in Great Britain
at the St. Ann's Press
Park Road, Altrincham

ISBN 0 7100 6810 7

Contents

to

C.M.E.

I

Introduction

policy analysis

To begin a study of foreign policy with an attempt at an acceptable, and an acceptably brief, definition of the nature of foreign policy would be to invite ridicule. The nature of foreign policy is not agreed, and one is tempted to believe that in political societies it never will be agreed. To some, foreign policy is entirely concrete. It is, in this view, a set of actual measures taken by actual leaders representing specific collectivities with specific interests to meet definite international challenges and opportunities. To others, foreign policy may be the pursuit of universal purposes in a global field of human relations. The scope for choice is clearly extensive, and the assumptions behind such choices must be of at least equal variety. This essay refuses to select any particular alternative, but examines several. And it contends that any acceptably coherent view of foreign policy demands a separate kind of analysis. One cannot, or at least one should not, examine the prospects of a race-horse in quite the same way as one examines the prospects of a football team. They may both be winners, but of different kinds and for different reasons. So this essay does not begin with a definition of foreign policy, and it will not end with one either.

In political argument, policy is commonly used in two broad sorts of way. First, the merits of one policy are set against the demerits of another. Second, action, inaction, and proposals for action are criticized against an abstract measure of policy. As an example of this second style, an action of government may be abused because it seems to further no coherent policy. In this way, authorities are often

assailed by demands for policy. This ideal use of policy invites some examination. Such a conception seems to contain some notion of choice constricting further choice. It is general decision from which further practical decisions follow. In this way, it would appear, order is projected into an uncertain future. Policy sorts out incoming data, and in the process it delineates the specific nature of lower order choices, which are instrumental and tactical. They yield action which contributes to the ends specified by policy. Ideally, it would seem that policy choices are made by the highest authorities in the polity, who in this process consult with the interests and values of their society. The outcome is a practical plan attaching clear priorities to the allocation of limited human, material and administrative resources.

This ideal conception of policy hits a number of difficulties in practice, particularly in pluralist societies. It assumes value coherence. This assumption can only be legitimate in totalitarian situations. It assumes that policy-makers can distinguish the point at which policy can be made and the range of activities to which it can be applied. In fact, this is far from being a common case. A decision or action of a mundane kind may be transformed by unfolding circumstances into a controlling choice of the utmost importance. Again, ideal policy transforms co-ordination into an executive function. In fact, co-ordination is often an objective of policy, as is demonstrated by the numbers of co-ordinating ministers of one kind or another who have found a place in the British cabinet. It is often the case that imperfect policy formulations in differing sectors of political concern are incompatible, in which circumstance co-ordination may itself become a policy struggle.

These practical problems are probably more intense in the area of foreign relations than elsewhere. Here information is always highly imperfect. The material upon which foreign policy attempts to work is often the radically diverse values, motivations, and political situations of others. What form can real policy choice take in a field such as this? What principles can co-ordinate relations with differing parts of the world? Is not policy simply response? How can the functional sectors of foreign concerns be co-ordinated? What principles can, for example, reconcile requirements of foreign economic policy and foreign military policy? And what form does co-ordination take in a foreign policy which attempts to contribute to international order but at the same time reserves to itself sole right of decision on matters appearing to touch on vital national interests? And how can

the contradictory mix of foreign policy be co-ordinated with the contradictory mix of domestic policy?

There is no shortage of problems. And in political societies there can be no entirely coherent answer to these problems. Politics works away at them. It would seem that ideal policy can never be practical policy. Yet statesmen persist in talking and, apparently, acting in terms of policy, and much political dispute is conducted in reference to policy. To say that policy does not, or cannot exist, in actuality would be to judge almost all political dialogue futile on the basis of a standard which, it would seem, can never be achieved. In political societies dispute on policy is a continuous, partial, imperfect matter.

Given the concrete imperfection of policy, and given its fundamentally contentious nature, how can it be discussed in a clear yet uncontentious way? Two general possibilities present themselves. First, one might retreat into history, to inquire into the characteristics of policy at a definite place at a definite time. Second, one might treat contemporary structures and mechanisms as the material of scientific investigation. How are a set of structures adapted to the problems of policy-making? What are the mechanisms of policy execution? How is policy debated? How are special influences brought to bear? And so on.

The first of these two possibilities offers opportunities for critical examinations of any kind to which the chosen subject may appear to be exposed. What were the inconsistencies of policy at a specific period? What were the assumptions of policy-makers and how mistaken were they? How did they tackle or fail to tackle the problems of co-ordination? Questions come to mind in an almost fanciful way. The second path is hardly fanciful. To work out, let us say, the structure of policy-making and opinion-formation in a current situation is not a task to be undertaken lightly. It may indeed seem to demand the serious application of difficult statistical techniques.

The difficulty with the first solution is that it often directs attention to policy which no longer excites or applies. It may sharpen critical faculties, it may convey the complexity of politics, it may engender a mellow sense of the continuity of the human predicament. But it can hardly tell us how our world works; and it can make little explicit contribution to the understanding of policy or policy debate outside the dubious framework of historical continuity. The difficulty with the second solution is that it seldom directs attention to policy at all. An inquiry, for example, into the organizational structure of a foreign ministry does not tell us much about foreign policy, except

on the highly questionable assumption that structures such as this determine the nature of policy.

Yet authority and policy are in a sense inextricable. It is virtually impossible to conceive of authority in the absence of authoritative rule. And it is equally difficult to conceive of authoritative rule without policy, even though this may be little more than a subjective apparatus for bolstering confidence in face of an uncertain future and, as such, may be egocentrically opportunist or negatively conservative. In historical studies the combination of authority and policy constitutes no particular obstacle to analysis. It is difficult to imagine a political study of an historical subject which does not concern itself with both the nature of authority in a given situation and the nature of policy, and dispute on policy, in that context. But a problem does arise in political science, where this is taken to mean the study of power and authority as these show themselves in political actuality. Science is the study of mechanism and process. It is singularly ill-fitted to the study of human purpose. Natural science knows no purpose in its subject-matter. The material universe, so far as science concerns itself, does not have purpose. So the degree to which political science attempts to emulate the methodology of natural science is the degree of its tendency to cut itself off from purpose. Yet statesmen and others connected with the political process often regard themselves, and are often regarded, primarily as men of purpose, muffled and contradictory though their purposes may be. And in a political society these purposes can scarcely be uncontentious.

The movement of political science towards natural science in part reflects the desire of analysts to dissociate their efforts from the actual processes of politics. Sometimes this may be felt to be a necessity; studies held to be partisan may have difficulty in attracting funds. Or it may be the product of an entirely becoming modesty; in exposition of policy academics rarely show those qualities of balance and wisdom to whose cultivation they are professionally dedicated. So proper professional application may be felt to equate with genuine science. Or, and more probably, it may reflect a commitment to an attempt, perhaps unsuccessful, to stand away from the subject of study in something like the way in which the physicist, of necessity, stands apart from the subject-matter of his study. Retreat from policy discussion is thereby to be equated with advance into objectivity.

But it can be argued that scientific objectivity, in a social area, is an illusion, and a sterile one at that. What kind of scientific laws

can such objectivity produce? There are two broad possibilities. First, generalizations may be made about a model. The difficulty here is that the terms of a model will never be agreed, and the nature of the connection between generalization and actuality never fully established. By such means one can prove everything and nothing at the same time. Second, a law may be attempted in the area of actual events: a revolution will take place, a war will take place. A scientific law, by its nature, must project itself into the future, and it must be open to refutation by evidence. Given that men do not live in a determined social world, the force of a social law in this sense can only be upheld by events which men, in some way or another, may attempt to control. A social science law must therefore participate in its own fulfilment, either by stimulating men to act out its projections, or, less positively, by not encouraging them to bend events in some other way. But men are contrary and some are likely to try, and succeed, in moving events to some invalidating degree. And many men are ignorant, and, innocent of one's law, may reason in ways one may not have thought of. A law in this setting is likely to be propagandist in its own cause. Whatever else it may be, such a law is not scientific in any acceptable sense.

However, political science does not absorb itself entirely in the pursuit of chimerical scientific laws. It also, and predominantly, concerns itself with explanation. Political structures and connections are explained, sometimes from a somewhat mechanistic viewpoint (how does it work? where does this piece fit?), and sometimes from a somewhat organic viewpoint (how do the units communicate? how does the system change itself?). But it is something of a curiosity that such explanatory efforts, though they may find a place for policy in their categories, may very well find no place for the discussion of the nature of policy. For example, it can happen that structures and processes may be analysed with the highest sophistication within the political context of goal-attainment or goal-pursuit. But the actual goals involved may be completely undiscussed, as if to imply either that they are agreed or that they are not discussable in an acceptably scientific way. The problem, if points such as these are felt to have any weight, is to find some coherent relationship between policy and political analysis. It would be an absurd exaggeration to say that this essay establishes such a connection. More appropriately it may be suggested that such a connection often exists and this essay does not seek to avoid it. Studies in

the area of foreign policy analysis commonly do not analyse policy; they more often analyse policy-making. These are not quite the same thing. First, such approaches often assume a definition of foreign policy which might not be acceptable if made explicit. Second, they sometimes seem to assume that policy is defined by the structures, both formal and informal, within which men struggle with its problems. When an assumption like this is declared it seems to be analytically crude. Alternatively, the problems of foreign policy may be approached non-analytically. The actual foreign actions and stances of actual states in more-or-less contemporary situations may be described. This can only contribute to a general understanding of the problems of foreign policy in an indirect way. The foreign policy solutions, if such they may be termed, of specific states do not necessarily explain what foreign policy is.

It is to the problems of understanding what foreign policy is that this essay briefly addresses itself. It considers a number of approaches to such an understanding. But it cannot escape from the fact that explanation of foreign policy is likely to contain recommendations about the way policy should operate. That is, policy analysis is likely, in some small way, to become involved in the policy-making process. For example, the viewpoint that holds policy to be tradition grinding its way into the future must, among other things, provide grounds for criticizing those who take an opposite position. The conviction that foreign policy must be largely determined by the environment within which it exists, and that this environment is dominated by the conflict of states, must be at odds with a view holding foreign policy to be merely a factor within global society and subject to an understanding of the nature of that society. Styles of understanding foreign policy are often themselves advisory and are almost always critical of other positions. One cannot analyse such styles without considering their policy implications in these senses. Policy analysis and policy can become entangled. In this area political science can only be equated with a search for consistency within styles, with a delineation of arguments between styles, and with a critical statement of the policy recommendations of styles, where there are any.

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part one

The fabric of foreign policy

2

Practice

Foreign policy appears to be large-scale. It deals with aggregates. It seems to penetrate all that is fundamental to continued human existence and to future human welfare. There is therefore a temptation to think of foreign policy in a grandiose style. To speak of it in terms of grand designs, human destiny, the will of nations. The view of foreign policy as practice firmly and consistently refuses to yield to such superhuman perspectives. Foreign policy can be nothing other than human and if it is human it should be practical. This view is practically aware that men group themselves, for the most part but by no means exclusively, within and around states to which strong and potentially dangerous feelings often attach. Practical problems arise in the affairs of these groups as they impinge upon one another. Foreign policy is the collection of measures, by no means intrinsically coherent, utilized by governments to meet these problems.

In other words foreign policy is not a novelty. It does not exist on a plane different from the rest of human activities. It is never free from muddle, from mistaken information, from the clash of personalities, from human infirmity in all its social guises. It is a fairly specific area of political activity, with some specific kinds of difficulties, but it is not cut off from other areas and it does not exist in some kind of special medium. Men have attempted to meet the problems of foreign policy for many centuries and in the process have built up some institutions and habits to assist them. These institutions and habits have evolved slowly. They do not have the purpose of solving the problems of foreign policy, which are no more open to final solution than other political problems. They are a means of

living with the problems of foreign policy and, given some luck, of rendering them less harmful than they might otherwise be. Foreign policy in this context is, then, persistence with the established means, principally diplomatic, of conducting foreign affairs, and, in making those decisions which may become necessary, it suggests caution in the face of external dangers and regard for the time-honoured ways in which one's society has met similar, though not identical, dangers in the past. The existence of a society, having government, implies a continuing tradition, without which continuous political dialogue, that is dialogue about the society's practical affairs, would be difficult if not impossible. So, from this viewpoint, the manner and the matter of politics become fused.

In a sense this view of foreign policy extinguishes policy. It casts doubt on any attempt at sweeping designs about an uncertain and largely uncontrollable future. The difference between decisions on day-to-day affairs and decisions on so-called large-scale issues is not great; or, more correctly, should not be great. Changes, where these are necessary, should be founded upon accepted notions of what is possible for the society concerned. Policy will, to a degree, be immersed in an outlook which is not itself selected but which is the product of the continued existence of the society in question. Partly it will be explicable in terms of specific interests (in economic relations, for example) and of geographical situation, and all the dangers and involvements arising from these. But it will be more than simply the logical extension of particular conditions in the international arena. It will be the style associated with the society's conduct of its affairs, and embedded in this style will be a set of attitudes towards international relations. This set of attitudes will be contained in the esablished institutions, formal and informal, of the polity, and they will have the effect of narrowing the area of possible disagreement among those actually making practical arrangements in the area of foreign affairs. In the same way, co-ordination among all the facets of current activities will be achieved, not in the sense of producing a clear, large-scale design, but in the sense that the dialogue on practical matters will be kept open day following day. So in a real sense the making and the execution of foreign policy will be inextricably involved with each other. Diplomacy will not be presented with some vast, logically coherent scheme to execute. On the other hand, diplomacy will not itself wander astray in the absence of explicit instruction, nor will it, in the ordinary exercise of its function, uproot itself from its society.

Such a foreign policy will find its proper medium in diplomacy as traditionally understood, that is, as evolved in the predominantly European past. Diplomacy in this context is the precise appreciation of the objectives of other states and the assessment of the degree of incompatibility between these objectives and the objectives of the home state; the adjustment between objectives, both those of the home state and of the putative opponent, will be conducted in an unheated, measured style until sufficient identity exists to maintain reasonably equable relations between the states concerned. The diplomat will have the function of representing his home state and of pressing its interests and of keeping it as fully informed as possible. At the same time he will be conscious of a position in, and a responsibility towards, the diplomatic community as a whole, somewhat in the sense that a lawyer serves the interests of his client while at the same time, ideally, remaining loyal to the legal community.

In a sense this conception of foreign policy defies analysis. Making distinctions between, let us say, policy and its execution immediately contradicts the conviction that such a distinction is false. Distinguishing actual activities in the international arena on the basis of large-scale schemes, or on a basis demanding such schemes, is again a contradiction, since large-scale schemes are not to be expected, and are, in any case, both undesirable and futile. However, it may be appropriate to attempt to indicate some of the qualities of the outlook under consideration.

First, it assumes that foreign relations constitute an area requiring practical knowledge and experience, just as a blacksmith's shop is an area requiring practical knowledge and experience. So, in a sense, the essence of foreign policy lies in the quality of diplomacy, which lies substantially in the quality of the diplomat. And the distinction between the diplomat and the foreign minister is one of degree, not of kind. Analysis, if such it can be called, must first centre on the nature of the good diplomat and on the nature of his skills. He must have the practical ability and stamina to conduct negotiations, to perceive the positions of others, to convey the nature of possibilities to his superiors and to negotiate with them to the purpose of adapting their positions to international circumstances. He must have a perception of his own position and function at once modest and sturdy. He must patiently resist massive excitements. He must withstand with equanimity the sudden shocks and rages which must fall upon him from time to time, and he must gratefully accept a small return on lengthy labours. He must see the world in terms of complexity and

the function of diplomacy to prevent a breakdown or a drastic revision of this complexity. He must be nicely concerned with the dignity and style of diplomats and of diplomacy, for these personify civilized contact between states, and he must attempt to serve that delicate civilization.

The essential characteristics of foreign policy are, then, practice and style. Practice is detailed and familiar contact with practical affairs which resist simple solutions and simple statement. The reality lies in the detail and in the interaction of detail lies the policy. Analysis of practice is itself practical. It concerns itself with specific detail. What can be done? What is desirable? How should a government react to a specific situation? The practical man does not ask what principles government should bring to bear on a general category of situations. Practice knows detail, abstract analysis does not. Practice knows the variables in every situation, it is open to the absorption of dissimilarities and discontinuities. Abstraction, in its concern for generalities, misses the essential variety of the practical world of affairs and is likely to distort this world in the perception of its adherents.

Practice knows detail, but it is more than detail. It knows continuity also, in the sense that it knows or exists in tradition. Most accessibly, tradition would seem to be the manner of conducting affairs, resulting from long social acquaintance with practical difficulties, in the setting of a mature appreciation that the more important aspects of life lie beyond practical matters. Tradition expresses itself in style, but it is far more than ornament, since it springs from, and has fundamental relations with, the culture of the community. It is profoundly concerned with the continued existence of that culture and with its sure development. Cultural development in this sense (not to be confused with, say, extending literacy) can only be slow. Culture cannot be created. It is impossible to scrap one culture and create another. Therefore, the approach to practical matters touching on fundamental concerns (not, say, drains and railways) must be critical. Achieved civilization, however slight, must be conserved. Judgements based on clear, organized parameters must be suspect. This is likely to be radical revision, because tradition contains rational systems, it is not dominated by them; and if it is, it is reduced.

The intellectual approach to this conception of policy must have a number of broad characteristics. First, the knowledge of culture and tradition cannot be suddenly conveyed. It can only be built up slowly by patient and carefully nurtured familiarity with the products of

culture, principally with its philosophical and artistic components. This, in a real sense, is what policy is about. Second, history offers some means of gaining familiarity with the complex, interlocking nature of events and of their relations with culture at specific periods of time. This does not yield practical lessons or rules. It nurtures an attitude sceptical of high-sounding schemes and principles bearing on practical matters, yet at the same time essentially and positively concerned for the qualities of human existence and for its potentialities for decency and civilization. Third, there is the careful description of existing institutions and practices (foreign ministries, international institutions, bargaining, treaties, and suchlike): this is technical information proper and necessary to the sphere of foreign policy. Fourth, and most important, there is actual experience in the field of diplomacy and public matters associated therewith.

This view of foreign policy is clearly one which is unlikely to present massive proposals, either to its adherents or to others. Perhaps the essence of the approach, in so far as it can be taken to extend itself to recommendation, is that those engaged in practical affairs should remain in touch with tradition. They may build, but only slowly, on what has been achieved. An attempt to go too quickly, the sudden execution of large-scale designs on inappropriate foundations, an inattention to detail, an absence of proper consultation with other craftsmen—any and all of these may bring large parts of the building crashing down. The future of the building depends on its foundations. These have been laid; they cannot be ignored; and they must be cared for.

So adherents to this view would seem to be led to attach importance to established positions. At the same time, this view is suspicious of general declarations, whether these purport to represent established policies or projected policies. It would not give unqualified support to a general declaration to resist aggression wherever it might occur, or to fight subversion wherever it might occur. It would be somewhat suspicious of wide-ranging, long-lasting treaties. Treaties tend by nature to inflexibility, they attempt to structure the future in advance. Only of necessity must they be entered into. And when contracted, their application must be strictly defined, their terms limited to as few contingencies as possible. Except in extreme necessity, treaty obligations to unstable (that is, 'untraditional') states must be avoided. Close connections must be fostered only with those states with whom it is possible to enter into a political dialogue. And these states will have, in all probability, cultural affinities with the home state. In all

possible cases diplomatic method is to be preferred in the conduct of foreign relations: the slow investigation of conflicting positions and the cool adjustment of those positions in the light of developing situations, is always to be preferred to the large-scale, essentially crude, public international debate and to the posturing conjunctions of heads of governments. Because there are those to whom diplomacy as such has little meaning, the state must always reserve to itself the means of defence, and, in some situations at least, the ability to attack.

This view of foreign policy would, in fairly specific terms, cast doubt on the validity of large-scale political organizations, such as the United Nations, as a means of securing the safety and well-being of a given political community. The traditional basis of practical dialogue in the UN is minimal, and the ability of the organization to limit the activity of states and their representatives is likewise minimal. As a convenient means of assessing some of the positions of other states it may have a place. In its capacity for maintaining the possibility of informal communications outside its public chambers it may be useful. As a simple and convenient means of countering the posturing of other states it may be necessary. As a way of cultivating the skills of true diplomacy, of slowly extending the depth and breadth of the diplomatic community, of giving some credence to the possibility of a universal civilization, it may be very desirable. But in all these things the UN is simply a means, supplementing other means, of serving long-term, desirable, but remote ends by way of fostering some kind of world community. In terms of its specific primary purposes, relating to security and international law, as set out in its Charter, the UN is not effective, never has been effective, and is unlikely to become effective in the practical future. Its furtherance is not, therefore, a considerable object of foreign policy, though it does not in any way follow that proper diplomacy should specifically aim to undermine it in any way additional to the many ways it has already been undermined. Practice does not reject experience, it is simply sceptical about its radical amendment.

Attachment to diplomacy and resistance to grand designs, modesty in manner and attention to practical tasks, minds wrapped in tradition and suspicious of sweeping declarations of friendship or of hatred for any sector of mankind, and a close and careful attention to the existing community of political, like-minded nations—these are some of the indicators of foreign policy as practice. They are really recommendations of attitude rather than of schemes. They suggest a mind

which would like the world to be a much better place but knows there are few short-cuts. And this attitude has much to recommend it. It conforms broadly with the views of traditional diplomats. It does not exclude change, but it is acutely aware of underlying realities: the power of states, the unreasonableness of politics in many parts of the world, the unexampled dangers of modern technology in its destructive capacity, the dangers of disappointed hopes and of rigid positions. It remains hopeful but makes no promises.

But it is an approach with clear difficulties. A revolutionary state attempting to forget tradition will find it uncongenial: to such a state tradition is a form of subversion, both externally and internally. That one major revolutionary state, the Soviet Union, is in fact far from being untraditional in its own terms, illustrates some of the contradictions inherent in the very notion of tradition. And for small states, the traditional viewpoint seems to imply a position of inconspicuous unimportance in world politics, a position of respectful and imitative support of traditional powers, a position they can hardly find congenial. Traditional diplomacy, in the European context, did not generally give much importance to small non-European states. Additionally, traditional diplomacy has about it a number of features to which liberal objection has been taken. It was not entirely averse to wars, though when large-scale conflict occurred this could be taken as a breakdown of diplomacy rather than its consequence. Its highly discreet processes could result in nations acquiring obligations unknown to large numbers of people directly involved. It was part of a social order which, though in many ways agreeably and creatively international and cosmopolitan, had, in domestic terms, some reactionary connotations. Anyway, it is a social order now substantially demolished, and in this radical way its style has been emptied of political content.

Foreign policy is authoritative or it is nothing. If it does not represent major forces in national and international society it is obviously trivial. Politics, international or national, is about the adjustment of major social forces. If some forces express themselves in unorthodox or brutal ways then other forces must adjust to that situation. Within a properly traditional mode of behaviour such outbreaks are not possible. But in a situation where there is no tradition (which, on the largest scale, is the case in international relations) then the established way of doing things must yield to the unestablished way of doing things. And where this happens tradition cannot be a guide, or, if it is a guide, its use may be disastrous. British and

French efforts to treat the Nazi leader as a European in the traditional sense very nearly brought complete disaster to Europe. An attempt of that kind is analogous to a lawyer attempting to conduct a reasoned case against an unstable criminal in a court with no judge, no means of enforcing rules of procedure, and no capacity for punishment. In many actual circumstances tradition must be a poor support. International politics persist in producing large-scale challenges of an unorthodox kind. Dislike of major schemes is no asset if one is presented with the necessity for large-scale decisions. Suspicion of long-term obligation becomes cynical where major allies are necessary and are insistent upon organizational departures in international affairs. Not merely may tradition be a poor support, it may also be an ambiguous, hence a bad, guide. In any given situation where many different traditions and many 'anti-traditions' meet, the possibilities for action may be varied. Which path to take? Tradition may suggest none and it may suggest several. Where the decision at issue is a very big one it may have nothing to suggest at all.

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3

Design

This view insists that there is such a thing as policy; that it can be cogitated; that it can be pursued; that it can be successful. Policy has direction. Its objectives can be defined, and means for their pursuit can be specified. Rational discussion of policy is both possible and desirable. It is possible because policy can exist in coherent means-ends form. It is desirable because the more clear policy-makers become about means and ends, the less likely are they to base their actions on imprecise intuitions bearing little relation to realities. Precision conquers crude emotional reactions to the predicaments of nations. And precise thinking in this area, as in all social circumstances, must be linked to the means-ends relationship. Ends cannot, or should not, be formulated independent of the availability of means for the achievement of such ends. And means cannot, or should not, be utilized without clear, realizable ends in view, which ends should condition the exercise of the means in question down to the smallest detail. As an example, somewhat in the style of Clausewitz, it may be suggested that nations should not pursue ends requiring the exercise of violence in the absence of such means; a policy like this will almost certainly produce frustration and might produce disaster. On the other hand, the exercise of violence in the absence of clear, realizable ends is likely to produce, at first, grandiose and absurd illusions about the place of military activity in international society. Later it is likely to produce military disaster through the over-extension of military commitment and the likely widespread international hostility to the possibility of conquest by uncontrolled military strength.

Ideally, then, policy is a reasonable integration of political means

and political ends in a world realistically perceived. Policy is responsible. It is coherent. Its ends are defined and its means are actually available. The harmony of ends and means is an acknowledged good, for without this harmony, the direction of policy in terms of practical effects must become largely unpredictable. Policy is determined by men. It is not a demoniacal force controlling the destiny of nations in a way beyond rational control. Where statesmen cling to dogma; where they appeal to fate; where they pursue ends in disregard of means or of consequences; where they allow one policy to negate another; where their ends exist only in unlimited rhetoric; then they have abandoned policy and have denied the power of reason. So the view of policy here under discussion is itself a contribution to policy, not necessarily in a tightly specific sense, but certainly in the sense that it concerns itself with the foundations of reasonable critiques of practical politics. It therefore entails a commitment to policy-making and must be seen as a contribution to this process. It is to be equated with a concern about the rational quality of the debate on policy.

The validity of this critical approach to the analysis of foreign policy must be judged in terms of its own coherence. If actual policy is to be measured against a standard means-ends design, it is legitimate to enquire into the nature of such coherence in this area. The basis of a rational critique must be open to discussion in its own terms. An ambiguous standard does not become suddenly unambiguous when applied critically to concrete circumstances. To begin, some conceptual texture has to be given to ends and means in international relations. One cannot discuss ends and means, and their relationship, in the context of foreign policy without suggesting some of the things ends and means may be taken to be. To this purpose it is far from arbitrary to select the ends of foreign policy to be national interest and security, and the means of foreign policy to be power and influence. Designs for foreign policy are commonly proposed in these terms: power and influence should be deployed to achieve security and to pursue the national interest. If agreement on the meaning of these terms could be reached, then a critical standard, applicable in ends-means form, would have been attained in the area of foreign policy. This discussion now becomes the examination of each of these concepts for internal consistency, and the examination of the means-ends connection in this conceptual setting, with a view to assessing its coherence as a critical measure in the examination of actual policy. To demand design in foreign policy is to demand noth-

ing unless some idea of the nature of design in this area can be conveyed. However, it will be contended here that the means-ends formula, in the present context, is a standard more applicable to debate than to action.

It would seem to be the common experience that national interest is a term used in political debate within a country to signal the case that the item of policy suggested will bring benefits not merely to its proponents but also to its opponents. It urges the case that the item in question serves the well-being of the whole social-political unit, it being assumed that where this can be shown the relevant proposal is desirable. In those situations where current policies are felt to be serving sectional interests, national interest is the foundation of a criticism urging statesmen to put the larger national constituency first in their calculations. Alternatively, where it is felt that statesmen are framing their policies with a view to serving the welfare of the world's society, or where they seem to put their nation's fate at the disposal of international law or international opinion to the neglect of more immediate measures necessary to its defence and the service of its needs, then national interest becomes a symbol recalling statesmen to the realities of life in a world in which civilized society is not a fact, and where there are no institutions capable of enforcing legal or moral judgements. National interest is therefore a part of political argument. On the one hand, it is set against sectional interests. On the other, it is set against what may appear to be universal interests. In one sense, it appears to be idealist. In another, it appears to be realist.

So national interest is put to distinct uses in political discourse. One must query its validity in these distinctive settings. As a critique of foreign policy seeming to be too much at the mercy of sectional interest the notion of the national interest is undermined by the fact that, in a complex society, policy having any practical aspects whatever is bound to have more impact on some sectors of the population than on others. A policy involving extra expenditure on armaments will have advantageous effects upon those involved in armaments industries and disadvantageous effects on those who might have benefited from some other use of the resources concerned. Any policy having concrete effects (and it would be legitimate to question whether a policy without concrete aspects is properly called policy in the means-ends context) bears unequally on the domestic population. So the argument on foreign policy in pluralist societies can always be reduced to questions arising from sectional interest.

This does not necessarily empty national interest of meaning. That the armaments industry benefits from a policy of rearmament does not render that policy the instrument of sectional interest, unless it can be shown that the armaments industry is more than executive in this matter. But in this general connection, the argument from national interest is not likely to be conclusive. It rather acts as a device to regulate the level at which argument is conducted. Reference to the national interest requires particular policies to be shown to have positive relevance to wide sectors of the society concerned, and to be shown to be of service to that society's values. If disservice seems to be at issue, then the debate must involve itself with the values concerned. The concept of the national interest can have some regulatory effect on the nature of an argument; but, in the present context, it is hardly likely to regulate the outcome of that argument.

Returning to the national interest in the setting of 'constituency' politics, here it is used to recall the statesman to an awareness of the distinctive demands of his own community in an international setting characterized by uncertainty, insecurity, and the absence of any institution capable of enforcing international justice. There are a number of ways in which national interest used in this way can bring the statesman 'back to reality'. It can remind him that the best should not be pursued to the detriment of the better. To attempt to secure a just world to the exclusion of those interests existing in the present, imperfect, environment is a course likely to be harmful to the statesman's constituency. For example, United States foreign policy during, and immediately after, the Second World War sought *entente* with the Soviet Union, and, in a wider context, it also sought the establishment of a liberal world organization having the means to enforce judgements. From a national interest standpoint it is, and was, argued that the interests of the USSR and the USA clashed in many areas in Europe and the Far East, and that consequently *entente* could only be secured by the sacrifice by the United States of some or all of its specific concerns. So *entente*, perhaps an admirable end in itself, required the surrender of interests necessary to the safety of the United States and of friendly powers. The pursuit of a liberal world organization, clearly linked in practical terms with the pursuit of great power *entente*, contained more subtle dangers. The establishment of the forms of world organization was relatively easy, but those forms could delude men into the belief that more had been achieved than was possible, and to abandon to the world organiza-

tion duties which it could not sustain. In general terms, it can be held that properly administered justice depends on a political community to support its terms and their imposition. Where there is no political community, or only a primitive political community, the forms of just rule are deceptive, and, from this viewpoint, it is therefore the duty of the statesman to his constituents not to be deceived. He must recognize the harsh realities of international life and place the virtues that do exist before the perfections projected by large schemes mistakenly treating the world as a political community.

Arguments from national interest are most adaptable. They are not merely useful against liberal idealism, they may also be deployed against idealisms of less attractive kinds. It is not entirely uncommon for states to acquire mystical properties in the eyes of their members. In these circumstances foreign policy may develop curious demonic compulsions. The state may be conceived to have a mission which compels it, perhaps, to attempt to subjugate its neighbours, or to enforce its will in geographically remote areas, or to assume extended obligations which it does not have the means to meet if called upon to do so. In situations such as these the argument from national interest can be seen as an antidote of the grandiose. Interest is not demonic. A question from national interest seems to require a hard, practical answer. It is not to be answered adequately in terms of slogans, nor by romantic references to destiny. Its practical nature draws attention to external resistance to large-scale purposes, whether they be military or ideological. It is likely to ask for a balance sheet clearly showing costs and benefits. It is not to be answered by an assertion that the nation wills such-and-such an objective. It asks why the nation requires this objective. By what means may this objective be achieved? Can the use of available means bring success? If the plan succeeds, how great will be the cost? If it fails, will the state be worse off than it was before? Questions such as these can deflate emotions. They seem to demand that practical problems be considered. They seem to require that values be placed in concrete circumstances in which questions of practicability are precisely relevant. But when discussion comes to hard practical matters, and content has to be given to national interest, then it is likely that bundles of sectional interests will be referred to. If interest is taken to be concrete, it is likely to be equated with the demands of definite economic sections of the community in question. This reverses the position in which national interest is used in argument to counter the demands of sections in relation to foreign policy. It also exposes the undeniable

fact that sectional interests often conflict with one another. That is why they are sectional interests. So if national interest is reduced to national bundles of interests, it no longer conceals the fact that interests are often contradictory, and therefore, perhaps, uncertain guides to policy.

Given that national interest, for all its ambiguities, is a kind of standing critique of emotionalism in foreign policy, the problem raises itself as to whether concentration on the immediately practical may not create blindness as to the central and longstanding problem of foreign policy, which, it can be argued, is the pursuit of security. Bundles of contradictory interests may be intellectually tractable, but men rarely go to war for them. If national interest, as opposed to interests, can be said to exist, it is difficult to deny that it is largely to be equated with security. National interest, taken to manifest an urge to realism in foreign policy, is likely to be equated with the realistic pursuit of security. Yet, because it urges coolness in such matters, it must invite an effort to clarify the nature of security. It must be the case that security has something to do with the environment of states, for this is the source of danger and destruction. Security must involve reference to the international environment, rather than to the clashing demands of sectional interests at home. In this sense it may be said to transcend those interests.

But on closer inspection security also becomes a concept full of ambiguities, dictating very little in the way of the application of definite means for its achievement. At bare minimum security would seem to denote safety from external attack for those living within national boundaries, which, on a global scale, means in effect safety for everyone, since few people live outside such boundaries. Safety, even at this minimum level, is not without its complications. Given that war is not in progress (if it were, safety could be equated with defence) it must be the case that safety is largely a psychological condition. Do the statesmen concerned, and their constituents, feel safe? Excluding pathological conditions, it would seem that in a world lacking authoritative institutions, they can only feel relatively safe or unsafe. The intensity of these feelings will relate largely to the view taken of the external environment at a given point in time. Numbers of policies will be available to enhance feelings of security: policies, for example, of alliance, of strict neutrality, of rearmament. The notion of security in itself will not, clearly, dictate choice among the options available, if there are any options. But some policy possibilities raise problems about the nature of security. There can be

no doubt, for instance, that the policy of surrender may enhance the safety of most members of the community; and, given that all non-trivial policies promote or enforce some social structures, it will be a policy supported by some groups in times of danger.

However, it is difficult to argue that a policy of surrender is instrumental to the goal of security, even though the physical safety of the population concerned may be ensured thereby. Surrender, it can be argued, is the abandonment of security. If this is taken to be so, security must be assumed to refer to values beyond that of the physical safety of population. The next minimum position must be that security refers to the continued existence of the state. But it is the case (certainly in a free society) that the nature of the state must be subject to some measure of dispute. It is almost certain that the state will be taken to refer to the institutionalization of certain additional values, such as justice or classlessness. In the nature of the case, values like these are not, at least in their potential, the exclusive possession of particular states. Security now becomes the protection of large values, though these values must include a sense of safety among the populace of the state in question. One's sense of personal safety tends to be low during war, so combining the two features established, security becomes the degree that important values are protected without warfare. And if war occurs, security becomes defence, and defence succeeds to the degree to which losses are minimized and the maintenance of values is maximized.

A community is more or less secure. If it wishes to make itself entirely secure, in both the physical and non-physical senses, it must either convert the rest of the world to its style of life, or it must conquer the rest of the world. Given that one accepts the essential diversity of the world, conversion would seem to be impossible; particularly is it impossible for a free community in which there is likely to be a good deal of disagreement as to what conversion should be about. Anyway, it can be well argued that liberty can only be an example to others, it can never be a mission to others. Totalitarian societies are unable to accept officially that world conversion is impossible in the future. But it has in the past been shown to be so. If world conversion is ruled out, world conquest becomes the only other means of pursuing absolute security. This is the pursuit of security to the extinction of the security of others. It is likely to meet such resistance that the initiating community may become far less secure than it was originally.

Seeing, then, that security is an imperfect condition, its pursuit

must involve variety, and, in some senses, compromise. The means of world conquest now become the means of building up military strength through alliances and armaments. And the means of world conversion become the means of acting upon the international environment in such a way as to render it less likely to be a place from which threats to security arise. The pursuit of military strength involves the diversion of scarce resources from other ends. A nation-state with a high commitment to internal welfare goals cannot make massive allocations to armaments. Such a state must either change its internal values, or be prepared to sacrifice or compromise on its external security values; its pursuit of security must almost certainly be associated with limited commitments and an increased emphasis on alliances of one kind or another, two courses not without mutual tensions. Allocation of resources, even in totalitarian societies, is usually a subject of dispute. And in the area of armaments an additional difficulty raises itself, in that the effect of increased strength, particularly in the nuclear age, may be seen as a direct threat to the security of other states, thus inspiring them to allocate more resources to defence. So the pursuit of security through strength may reduce security in this way. An arms race does not provide the conditions of a safe environment. In a crisis situation it may stimulate states to go to war quickly in order to seize whatever advantage, illusory or otherwise, which they may seem temporarily to have gained. So the pursuit of security by strength may be a self-defeating course.

A simple sense of prudence may therefore stimulate some states to devote a good deal of attention to their general political environment. There is clearly a measure of selfish wisdom in this. A man who acquires a splendid flock of sheep may well be selfishly inclined to devote some of his resources to their environment, from which thieves, wolves and diseases may come; so, after taking his own measures to protect his flock, he may join with others to eliminate wolves, restrain thievery, and to institute general procedures designed to reduce the ills to which sheep are prone. It is conceivable that attention to the environment may be so effective as to obviate the necessity for strength. In a world without aggression, states would be foolish to set aside large resources for defence. Their only motive for acquiring strength in these circumstances would be to break the rules and aggress themselves. However, during the substantial period in which nation-states have existed security has never been established on a universal scale. The disarmament which some western states undertook after the First World War in an attempt to

improve the international environment (among other motives) was subsequently made to seem naïvely foolish when they suffered severe military setbacks from powers whose views of security differed substantially from their own.

Security on a world-wide basis, it would seem, could be achieved on the basis of two possibilities: world hegemony by one unchallengeable power, or world order. The first might result from the victory of a single power in a major war. From a number of viewpoints it might be agreed that neither this process nor this result is desirable; and if it is desirable, it can only be so to the prospective winner and can therefore be a guide to policy only to those very few states who may see themselves as such. The second solution might result from the establishment of the world institutions required; and in fact two large-scale, though slightly different, attempts have been made to establish such during the present century. One set of world institutions currently exist: an international court, a set of political institutions with rule-making functions, economic institutions to secure universal welfare, a military staff committee to make arrangements for a world force, and so on. It can be argued, though not of course shown, that security has declined during a period of unexampled effort in the field of international organization. Given that total security is possible through world organization, it remains awkwardly the case that a world order of such effectiveness cannot, so it seems, come into being at the stroke of a pen, at least this has been previous experience. So a long period of development, or learning, must precede effective organization for world security, a point probably admitted by the most unsceptical adherents to this solution to the problem of security. During this lengthy period states must look to their defences in fairly traditional ways. And it must almost certainly be the case during this interval, that the relative allocation of resources and values between the improvement of the environment and the maintenance of alliances and military strength will be the subject of a continuous argument in which it will be difficult for the individual to maintain an entirely consistent position.

The ambiguities of security are further intensified where it is sought by means of policies of nuclear deterrence. For in this case, the means adopted undermine the security of other states very directly, in the sense that deterrence depends on the ability of the deterrer successfully to attack his adversary should the adversary act in an unacceptable way. This means that the deterrer is likely to be straining to develop his capabilities so that he may always overcome

the defensive measures of possible opponents. In the nature of the case, it is to be expected that the deterrer's possible adversary, or adversaries, should exert themselves to maintain a similar threat. The pursuit of policies of deterrence can therefore be supposed to have the effect of generally undermining both safety and security in most imaginable situations. The continued aim of security may encourage deterrers to take steps among themselves, first, to reduce the possibility of catastrophic accidents, and, second, to reduce the motivations to excessive expenditure on the maintenance of attacking potential. This latter course would suggest the lessening of defensive measures (such as anti-missile armaments, or permanent underwater submarine detection and elimination devices) in order to maintain the deterrence potential of the possible opponent at a stable level. Such a policy of security might thus seem to require a sacrifice of some measure of safety.

It would appear to be the case that the ends of foreign policy may indicate a style of debate, a psychologically desirable condition, or a degree of awareness of the difficulties attending the pursuit of any large-scale objective in international relations. From most viewpoints, the ends suggested are far from clear and they convey little as to means appropriate to their attainment. As an example, the objective of destroying an adversary dictates the policy of war, and in a specific situation this end will dictate much as to the means by which the war in question should be prosecuted: but the objective of security suggests a range of possible policy means, many of them mutually exclusive or contradictory, some of them entailing a reduction of safety, and all of them open to debate. However, to draw attention to these difficulties is not to suggest the statesmen do not have objectives. Clearly they do; if only because they say they do. Yet it seems that most actual objectives, though often clothed in general terms, are more immediately specific: to get another state to act in a particular way, to move an alliance in a particular matter, to obtain a definite benefit in trade, and so on. It must be that means, or some conception of means, are utilized in the pursuit of these interim goals. Let us typify such means as power and influence. This characterization corresponds to common usages such as 'the exercise of power', 'the use of influence'. To proceed in this manner is not to accept such usages, it is merely to find in them meanings worthy of elaboration and enquiry.

Power in international affairs is often taken to refer to the capacity of a state to wage war successfully against possible opponents. In the

absence of an actual war to prove the point, power in this sense refers to the capacity which could be mobilized in a crisis. The capacity for violence is clearly related to a number of apparently tangible factors: industrial capability, population, skill, organization, geography, morale. But these, and other, factors vary in importance over time, none more so than morale. A united population is likely to be more powerful than a disunited population; but no population is united indefinitely. Here we strike an immediate and major difficulty. Power always refers to a relationship of some kind and to an issue of some kind. One has power over someone in a context. A state has power over another state in the context of an issue or a set of issues. In the context of one issue, a state may be united; in the context of another, it may be disunited. And both issues may be of current pre-occupation, and each may react upon the other. The importance of geography, to take another example, is equally dependent upon relationships. The defensive potential of Britain's island position varies in relation to the kinds of weapons which may be used against her, and these depend upon the nature of the state with which she is at issue. A mountainous and difficult terrain in, let us say, Asia may be unappetizing to the military forces of a major power; but it may be highly congenial to guerilla forces operating in an ideological way.

Continuing an earlier example, the greater the potential for war, the greater may be the limitations on its exercise in specific issues. Nowhere is this more evident than in the development of the maximum destructive potential, nuclear weapons and advanced means for their delivery. Techniques of this order are unlikely to confer the overwhelming capacity for waging war successfully, because other powers are likely to develop similar capacities and thus offer the prospect of general catastrophe to any state initiating hostilities at this level. The power of nuclear weapons, such as it is, resides in the capacity they confer on their possessors to put large sectors of humanity at risk. They offer the capacity to manipulate risk. But the risk is an extreme one, and few would wish to bring it to bear in areas not of central concern. This risk is likely to be shared, almost equally, with at least one possible major opponent. An interest is thus created between such opponents to prevent this radical risk from becoming actuality where this is not intended. This common concern can, and does, take the form of direct communication between potential nuclear opponents in order to clarify intentions, to limit commitments, to prevent a direct clash of forces (or, by implication, of policies) in sensitive areas. So the capacity to wage war

with this intensity may confer very little power for actual coercion; in fact this may be reduced, in the sense that a state of this class may be anxious to avoid risks wherever possible. In relation to subversionary warfare, this sort of capacity, if unused, confers no advantage, only the cost of its continued maintenance. And the influence of minor powers may be enhanced by the existence of major nuclear powers, simply by virtue of the ability of some minor powers, in some circumstances, to trigger a disastrous major war which they themselves may be entirely incapable of waging.

The more one examines the concept of power in the shifting market of international forces, the more elusive does it become. This is not, of course, to say that military strength is illusory. Strength can conquer nations. It is clearly the case that the ability of the Soviet Union to invade Czechoslovakia gives the leaders of the USSR power over the leaders of Czechoslovakia. But even this apparently simple case is full of complexities. The ability of the USSR to invade this country with impunity is partly, at least, conferred on the USSR by the balance of forces in Europe and in the world at large; in other words, it is part of the organic structure of international society in the present phase. As well, the power conferred on the USSR by this capability may reduce its power elsewhere in the world; it certainly reduces the international credibility of the alliance of which the USSR and Czechoslovakia are members. In a sense, invasions of this kind are indicators of a lack of power, and their influence in the future may be to reverse the situation which makes them possible now. To suggest that power is an ambiguous concept is not to deny that guns kill people, merely that the effects of killing power become enmeshed in complex sets of relationships wherein a search for simplicity may become a blind effort to verify a myth. The simplest test of military power would be an exercise of it in an all-out war involving major nuclear states. But given that major nuclear states exert themselves to avoid this resort to simplicities, it follows that all actual applications of force are relatively small-scale. They are therefore hedged around and infused by complex international and national influences. Force therefore becomes subservient to influence.

But again one must ask—influence for what? Weakness can be an influence. The United Kingdom has in the past exploited its economic weakness to get states to act in ways they might otherwise not have acted. It can even be argued that this weakness should have been exploited more often. It is commonly the case that a statesman

exploits his own weakness: he has to urge such-and-such a course because he will fall from office if this course is neglected, and the consequences of his fall would be detrimental to those over whom he is thus attempting to exert influence. The point is that to suggest that one asset, or one simple set of assets, confers influence, is to place oneself in a readily undermined position. The assets that can confer influence are various: common culture is, or was, an asset in Britain's relations with the USA. Financial strength may be an asset: the relative position of the German Federal Republic in Europe owes much to her accumulation of economic assets. On the other hand, the prospect of the collapse of sterling has in the past led many nations to indulge the economic weaknesses of the UK. The many weaknesses of the government of South Vietnam have, in some circumstances in the past, given it an additional influence with the government of the United States.

Influence relates to the need to get another state to act in a congenial manner. Bringing influence to bear is likely to mean offering the other party the prospect that if it does not act in the desired fashion events will take a turn unfavourable to it. This ability to move events, or to appear to do so, bears no rigid relationship to the strength, economic or otherwise, of the state concerned. It may be conferred by the conjunction of the activities of other states as they bear upon a state of some inherent weakness. However, influence of this last kind is likely to be spasmodic. Most states may be said to aspire to influence of a more lasting kind. To this end they must acquire assets of their own which they may deploy at crucial moments, particularly when the conjunction of the influences of other states is not favourable. Assets in this range are likely to include some military strength (to 'buy' influence in an alliance, for example), some economic strength (in the long run, being a lender is likely to confer more influence than being a borrower), and some political skill (assets plus a favourable conjunction of events will not carry influence unless they can be exploited politically). Clearly, skill may compensate for the absence of more concrete assets in the short run. Equally, an important geographical or ideological position can be of the greatest importance; but this kind of importance is one granted by other powers, and other powers may quickly turn their attention elsewhere. In the long run, influence is likely to depend on the traditional strengths of morale and exploited resources. At the same time, it must be remembered what the use of the term influence implies, not that the state in question can coerce or destroy, but

merely that it can enter into a dialogue backed by the knowledge that it can confer or deny advantages of some kind; in other words, that it can negotiate from some degree of strength. The extent of a nation's strength in this sense will depend on many factors besides those lying within its direct control.

The effect of this discussion has been partially to undermine the general means-ends formulation of the nature of foreign policy with which this chapter began. That formulation was both descriptive and prescriptive. In general terms, it would seem that its descriptive capacity is defective in the sense that where dogmatic stands on the meanings of the ends of national interest or security are abandoned, these terms are seen to convey relatively little that is clear in empirical terms. A state may pursue security, but when can it ever have security? Equally, the means of pursuing ends, specified here as power and influence, evade firm definition. The harder one searches for an understanding of such means, the more one is drawn into the complexity of international life in general; that is, one is drawn away from foreign policy towards what may appear to be an understanding of the international system. As a prescriptive formulation, the means-ends arrangement must be applied to specific situations. Stated in general terms it may cause little dispute because it has little meaning. But relating it to concrete problems will never be uncontentious. However, it is at least arguable that debate in these terms is to be recommended on the ground that it directs attention unemotionally to what is possible in terms of the materials available. Debate at this level, it may seem, is preferable to debate at more elevated ideological peaks, from which nations sometimes plunge themselves into disaster.

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4

Decision-making

Except for ideologists of particularly sweeping conviction the world seems to be a complicated place, and the relations between states are far from being the least complicated part of it. It will be appreciated by now that one of the prime difficulties of analysis in this area is finding a point of reference upon which to centre one's attention. It is arguable that it is impossible to obtain any degree of analytical precision if one is continually shifting the focus of one's attention. A solution to this problem is sometimes found in the concept of decision-making. Thus it is taken to be the case that the substance of foreign policy is determined by authoritative decisions. By fixing this idea before one, it is possible to organize and categorize data and values in a coherent way.

Not merely is this method appropriate to the study of foreign policy, it can also be held to give a firm basis for the study of international relations as a whole. International relations are a kind of market where foreign policies meet and adjust to one another, so a thorough understanding of foreign policy, in the setting of the market within which it operates, will yield a thorough understanding of international relations. Decision-making analysis is applied to foreign policy at three distinct levels of generality. First, there is the analysis of foreign policy decision-making in a particular state. Second, there is the level at which the foreign policies of several specific states are compared on the basis of a distinct scheme of decision-making categories. Third, there is the very generalized analysis of state decision-making in the context of global relations; at this level, the

study of foreign policy decision-making may be conceived as the precursor of a general theory of international relations. Many conceptual problems are common to all three levels of analysis. But each level adds to the difficulties at the level beneath, so this discussion will start from the least generalized level.

Provisionally, one may take decision to mean a mental choice resulting in action intended to achieve a desired goal. In the present context choice is authoritative, that is, it directly affects the actions of others. The process of decision-making conveniently divides itself into phases: the gathering and assessment of information, the specification of problems, the framing of alternative solutions, the selection of a course of action, the co-ordination of agencies, the execution of the selected alternative, the assessment of its results, the feeding-back into the decision-making process of problems arising from the success, partial success, or failure of the action taken. (Such a schematic arrangement is open to endless elaborations which will not be touched upon here.) Each stage of the process raises structural and value problems to which appropriate reference may be made. Problems of communication arise at every stage. Organizational and other values are likewise always at play. For example, information is gathered by people in an organization of some kind, and it is reasonable to suggest that not only will they be influenced in what they perceive to be important and worth reporting by personal values but also by the values of their organization. They will, perhaps, pass on only information their organization can best deal with, or which is likely to further their careers. At the centre of authoritative choice, structural and value problems are clearly at their most intense. The selection of the decision-making framework provides the means of organizing large quantities of data along the stages of the decision-making process. This is simple, but not simplistic. Each stage may be used to refer to numbers of intractable problems of organizational response to external and internal conditions. And it is a scheme suggestive of some philosophical problems of perception.

So, it can be held, the decision-making framework offers a clear, yet modest, way of analysing the structure of foreign policy decision-making in a given country, while at the same time being suggestive of more general moral and political problems upon which the analyst may discourse at inclination. It is a neat and quick way of conveying information, particularly structural information, about the place of embassies, foreign ministries, cabinets, presidents and so on, in the process of decision-making. And though the decision-making scheme

tends to direct attention at specific structures, it is usually delineated in generalized terms (information gathering, for example) and so can readily accommodate itself to the informal nature of much of the political process (gossip gleaned by ministers from journalists or personal acquaintances, for example). Equally, the scheme does not blind its user to the central fact that the formulation of a problem requiring decision may be vital to the course of action taken. The perception of the nature of a problem may control decision, but may itself be controlled by structural and value determinants at a very early stage in the process.

The decision-making scheme can therefore be held to have the uncommon qualities of economy and comprehensiveness, modesty and generality. It is, in one sense, theoretical, but it predicates no general theories. It comprehends both process and structure. It finds a place for, though can hardly be claimed to encompass, values and images. For all this, it is clearly not an outlook without defects. Principal among these is its inherent tendency to cast the analyst, perhaps unwillingly or unnoticed, in the role of an efficiency consultant to government. The fact that a decision-making framework is so amenable to diagrammatic representation clearly emphasizes its tendency to be interpreted in terms of efficiency. The problems of co-ordination and communication are highlighted at each stage of the process, and proper attention is drawn to the need for making arrangements for feedback procedures. The fact that the neatness of his categories does not blind the analyst to the informal and sometimes chaotic nature of actual decision-making (the foreign minister's digestion cannot be entirely unimportant) in no way contradicts the inbuilt consultancy bias of his approach. Properly, the process should proceed through the specified pre-decisional phases, to the moment of decision, thence to action and feedback. Where in fact it appears that decisions can be controlled, for example, by problem specification early in the proceedings, then this is a grave difficulty of which those further along in the process should be acutely aware. Similarly, at each stage the scheme is likely to draw attention to the necessity of co-ordination and, by implication, of consultation; it is difficult, if not impossible, to co-ordinate without also consulting.

It need not be a drawback that a conceptual arrangement should push its adherent into the position of an adviser. In a sense, it is argued here, this is inevitable. But one may query the kind of adviser a particular scheme is likely to turn one into. In the present connection, one might feel oneself becoming a kind of business

efficiency expert. One is not concerned with the product, or with the values that make it attractive. One is simply concerned with its production. The foreign policy decision-making analysis of a particular country can proceed quite happily with virtually no discussion of the actual policies themselves, nor of the objectives at which they may be directed. Values can be placed in convenient categories and an assessment of their contribution to decisions hazarded; but they are not, in terms of the conceptual framework, thereby opened to discussion.

Yet one is hardly likely to be a very good efficiency expert on a decision-making basis. In the first place, decision-making schemes tend to sidestep the difficulty presented by the vast number of decisions being taken. The process does not turn out a relatively simple product. Decisions clearly have to be made at all stages of the process, not merely at the central point. Ideally, therefore, decisions should be ranked accordingly. But the decision-making scheme offers no criteria for ranking decisions. Ranking would seem to be one of the many decisions the decision-making process makes; which is not much of an intellectual advance. Second, the emphasis on co-ordination is hardly likely to be very helpful. The vast area over which co-ordination may seem desirable must conflict with the actual energy and availability of decision-makers, who are likely to feel the need to economize on time and effort. Additionally, the emphasis on co-ordination may be criticized at a more fundamental level. A fully co-ordinated political system is a totalitarian ideal, rather than a liberal condition of good government. A lack of co-ordination may be productive of liberty. It may also have the creative function of preventing the governmental machine from over-committing itself. A lack of co-ordination may confer flexibility. Third, decision-making analysis often ignores the key problem of actually making decisions: that is, of the application of criteria to a problem with a view to solving it. Consultation, co-ordination, and communication do not necessarily advance decision, and can often be seen to retard it.

In more general terms the notion of decision itself may be suspect on a number of grounds. In the area of foreign policy it is clearly relevant to ask what constitutes a policy decision. By implication it would seem to be different from other kinds of decisions. If policy is taken to be the goal of authoritative activity, then the problems raised in the previous chapter apply. Additionally, the whole notion of decision as applied to large-scale ends of state action may be questioned. In what sense, for example, is the identification of an

enemy a decision? How can the desire for economic advance be called a decision, without thereby emptying the word of all distinctive meaning? If statesmen see themselves as responding to the demands of international exigency, then it is not unreasonable to describe the international system as the policy decision-maker; but decision is thereby destroyed as a descriptive and explanatory device. Many of the actual decisions relating to both foreign and domestic affairs have to do with the allocation of scarce public resources among alternative schemes. Resources allocated to weapons cannot also be allocated to hospitals; the maintenance of large foreign bases will affect the balance of payments, and the effort to keep the balance of payments on a fairly even keel may involve many kinds of restrictions on domestic private and public expenditure; and so on. The urgency of decisions of these kinds is largely determined by long-term movements of general values. The actual decisions taken are partly executive to values in this sense, and partly they are concerned with merely marginal expenditures within a long-term, value-determined, trend. How can a long-term social commitment to welfare be fairly called a decision? Yet there can be no doubt of the importance for foreign policy of such major public orientations.

It is often suggested that the decision-making framework ignores the problems of bulk and uncertainty. It seems to some as if the decision-making analyst is simply rendering all decisions into one typical decision and then following this typical decision through its various stages. Two main difficulties immediately become apparent. First, this procedure goes backwards: one starts from the idea of decision and then finds out about pre-decisional phases. In fact, many situations can exist where nobody knows whether a decision is to be taken, or even if a decision should be taken. An ambassador reporting a piece of information to his ministry need not do so with a view to contributing to a decision of some kind. In this sort of way, it can be forcefully argued that a good deal of activity both in the domestic and external arenas is not decisional in any precise sense. Second, regardless of how much political and administrative activity is non-decisional, a good deal of it is decisional. So on a national scale numbers become huge. And each decision differs slightly from every other decision. This is why a situation requires a new decision rather than depending on an old decision. Given this to be so, decision-making analysis disappears under a welter of different kinds of decisions. The way out of this difficulty is to distinguish some decisions as being more important (perhaps more analysable) than others. This inevitably

returns us to the question of what constitutes a policy decision. Clearly such a decision must be more important than other kinds of decisions, and its importance must reside largely in its function as a controlling factor over other, lesser, decisions. Yet this suggestion leads only to further problems. A controlling decision may appear of little significance when taken; its controlling nature becomes apparent over time. Secondly, some apparently controlling decisions turn out in the long run not to be controlling; what appears to be important commonly turns out to be less so. In a sense, history reveals which are the policy decisions.

Finally, at the level of decision-making analysis of individual state systems, it can be queried whether the notion of decision can have very wide explanatory or descriptive application. Is it the case that statesmen see themselves primarily as makers of choices? It is undeniably the case that they do make choices, but this is not all they do. Often they avoid choices. And sometimes they see themselves as moulders of situations rather than as decision-makers. A head of government who travels widely abroad holding long indecisive conversations with other leaders and attending numbers of equally indecisive public functions, is unlikely to see himself as the performer of useless ceremonies. It is far more probable that he will have the intention of forming attitudes, building relationships, and generally structuring the situation in which he finds himself. This sort of activity is likely to be even more common on the domestic front. Whatever else they may be, these kinds of actions are certainly political, but they are hardly decisional.

Decision-making analysis, with its emphasis on a clear but general characterization of the stages of decision and on the influences operating at each stage, lends itself not merely to the analysis of policy-making in one country but to the analysis of this process in a number of countries. This multi-state approach, it can be argued, is not merely possible, it is positively desirable. Foreign policy analysis of one country is inevitably distorting in the sense that a large part of what foreign policy is about is the foreign policies of other countries. The proper study of foreign policy must therefore be concerned with multi-state operations, because the understanding of the foreign policy of one country directly depends upon an understanding of the foreign policies of other countries. And if the study of foreign policy is to be pursued as an entry to the understanding of international relations, then the need to apply an analysis to more than one state is raised to the level of necessity. Whatever else international

relations comprise, they certainly encompass a large number of differing foreign policies.

The desirability of raising the focus of decision-making analysis from one country to many may be readily conceded. The problems encountered in actually doing so are formidable. All the difficulties already mentioned are no less imminent. Additional to them are the embarrassments long associated with comparative political studies. If one's analytical scheme is too tightly organized, its rigorous application is likely to make all states look alike. As description this is inaccurate, if only because the members of different nation-states tend to regard themselves in utterly distinctive ways. As explanation it is unconvincing. If states were all alike their foreign policies would be virtually indistinguishable. This would certainly not exclude conflict, but it would exclude variety, flexibility, unpredictability, and all the other features of international life which call for explanation. As prescription, it could be disastrous, if it led statesmen to imagine (though they would be unlikely to do so) that they were dealing with basically identical entities.

One way of escaping from the problems of making dissimilar things seem similar is to relax one's framework of concepts to the point where they become useful pegs for discussing a variety of phenomena. Thus, for example, a place may be provided for the influence of institutions upon decision-makers; and, in another category, for the influence of values upon decision-makers; and so on. Categories such as these provide for three possibilities: first, for general statements, substantiated by particular references, about the place of institutions or values in decision-making; second, for the broad discussion of the place of institutions or values in particular cases; and, third, some intermediate stage providing for particular references and some very tentative general assertions. The first alternative calls for general theories of the widest possible kind. These are not available, not yet anyway, so this alternative looks to a state of affairs not yet attained (and which can, as we shall see, readily be held to be unattainable). The second alternative, in all essentials, is no different from a decision-making study of an individual case. It is simply the placing together of individual cases. So we are left with the third alternative, which is one likely to be congenial to those wishing to organize an extremely wide set of discussions without asserting an overall doctrine or ideology. In this context, the notion of decision is useful because it permits wide discussion of the concrete, political, psychological and doctrinal influences bearing upon authorities, without losing sight of

the fact that in actual situations things happen (though not always as a result of conscious authoritative choice). This is the peculiar attraction of decision-making analysis in this category, that it combines what might be called the traditional discussion of institutional effects (the place of cabinets, chiefs-of-staff, foreign ministries, and suchlike) upon foreign policy, with more abstract considerations (the moral problem of power and foreign relations, the relevance of international law, and suchlike), the whole combined with comments upon the actual behaviour of authoritative decision-makers in the arena of world politics.

This, then, is a neatly eclectic approach to foreign policy and international relations. But like all eclectic arrangements it contains, and may even create, numbers of painful stresses. First, it is clearly the case that a decision-making arrangement must be minimally schematic. It is, for example, likely to suggest pre-decisional, decisional, and post-decisional phases of the policy process. But it is equally clearly the case that actual decisions may not be similarly neat. Second, as has been suggested above, process analysis of this kind, however relaxed in application, must tend to obscure the fact that in actuality the real point of decision may be far removed from authorities. And, more importantly from a conceptual point of view, it will almost certainly conceal the fact that many important decisions are only detectable as such after the event. Third, the conjunction of what is behavioural and what is non-behavioural is necessarily strained. To inquire into the actual behaviour of statesmen is one thing; to discourse, as an example, upon the status of natural law is another. It would seem that the only way to establish a connection between such apparently dissimilar items is to propound a political theory which must, among other things, be highly prescriptive. Prescriptive theorizing is not wholly wicked, but it strays far from the narrow path of behavioural politics.

The problems of theory become, in a sense, more acceptable at the highest conceptual level of decision-making analysis to be considered here. This is the level long conceded to be the domain of Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, whose collective work on foreign policy decision-making first appeared in 1954. This work is both modest and grandly ambitious. It was essentially a general framework into whose categories the results of empirical research could be fitted and from which, it was vainly hoped, would emerge general thory of the most comprehensive kind. The level of analysis is that of any state, the state being regarded as the prime decision-making unit. All states may

be understood by a properly conceived analysis of one conceptual state. And if the actions of all states are understood, then international relations are understood. The state is not treated as a solid, enclosed entity, a billiard ball. Analysis centres upon the decision-making of those authorities sanctioned by custom, politics, force, or ideology to act on behalf of the state. In this sense, and only in this sense, is the state an actor. Decision-making is defined by Snyder, Bruck and Sapin as 'a process which results in the selection from a socially defined, limited number of problematical, alternative projects of one project intended to bring about the particular future state of affairs envisaged by the decision-maker' (Snyder *et. al.*, 90).

Decision yields action, and action involves the pursuit of goals by given means in a situation. The situation 'is defined by the actor (or actors) in terms of the way the actor (or actors) relates himself to other actors, to possible goals, and to possible means, and in terms of the way means and ends are formed into strategies of action subject to relevant factors in the situation' (Snyder *et. al.*, 64). So the world is analytically recreated as decision-makers view it. A famous box diagram categorizes and relates the various sectors of experience, both inter-state and intra-state, from the viewpoint of decision-makers (see Snyder *et. al.*, 72). Here will be found boxes referring to the societal environment of decision-makers (with slots referring to common value orientations, institutional patterns, groups, major social process and the like), to the external setting of decision-makers (with slots for the nonhuman environment, other societies, other states, the actions of governments and the like), and to the setting of decision-makers in their internal geographic, social, cultural, and demographic environments. Relations between these categories are suggested by numbers of arrows. This scheme is built round action, in the sense that action is taken to be the result of decision. The overall situation of the decision-maker, as decision-maker, is structured and defined in terms of a perceived problem or condition to which decision and action may be applied. A decision clearly implies a problem to which it is an answer of some kind. So each situation has this kind of focus. There may therefore be many situations and they may overlap. And, clearly, as actions proceed, objectives are redefined. The simplicity of this scheme is, then, somewhat illusory. On a global scale it must involve vast sets of interacting situations, and even in the simplest individual situations many of its categories fail to conceal underlying problems of ancient intractability. What, for example, is the relationship between values and action?

The Snyder scheme is a fairly vulnerable one. For all the emptiness of its boxes, and the non-attribution of relative weights to them, this framework is conceived to be the precursor of theories of the broadest kind. It is questionable at the outset whether the notion of decision could ever carry so large a burden. Rosenau points out (1967, 202–11) that if the object of theory in this area is the prediction of political events, then decision is in itself an inadequate foundation. The relationship between decision and actual happening is often, even usually, not what was intended at the moment of decision. The world does not turn out to be what we expect or what we want. A general theory must therefore concern itself with the relationship between targets and events, and this relationship cannot be reduced to a purely decisional one, if only because decision always takes place in the present, whereas variations in targets and relationships between targets and actions work themselves out over time.

The Snyder scheme as the precursor of general theory requires large numbers of researchers to gather data, and large numbers of theorists weighting such data, to fill out its empty categories. If this requirement is not arrogant, it is certainly unrealistic. Even supposing the existence of hordes of researchers so unimaginative as to allow their activities to be determined by an *a priori* scheme, the data required by Snyder and his colleagues attaches to all states, all decisional units, in the international arena, and, clearly, whatever the resources available, information cannot be gathered on so massive a scale. Snyder and his associates appear to meet this point in their general assertion that their scheme applies to the state, to a conceptualization of the political system. But given that it is possible to reduce all states to a single conceptualization of the political system, an obvious difficulty is seen in the Snyder outlook. The single state political system as a given model can only have international relations with itself. From a conceptual standpoint this reduces international relations to an unconvincingly trivial level. A given system cannot be changed by its exact duplicate. If it could, it would no longer be duplicated, except in the odd circumstance that the change in question were itself exactly and simultaneously duplicated. In this context, simultaneity negates causality. In other words, the causes of change would have to be found elsewhere than in the duplicated system. Thus Snyder and his colleagues extinguish international relations. If international relations are to be revived, many kinds of political system have to be conceptualized. In this connection, Snyder *et. al.* (63) refer very briefly to the desirability of a typology of states or

political systems. Many such typologies make themselves available from time to time. They raise two fundamental problems in the present context. First, by what criteria does one make a choice among these typologies? In the connection under discussion, such a choice is likely to be dictated by some received idea of the nature of the international system. But such a procedure puts the international system in the position of controlling the notion of the state, which is a reversal of the general decision-making orientation. Second, whatever one's choice, the activity of typologizing is almost inevitably an ideological one. If one attempts a non-ideological standard of typology, such as power, one becomes committed, as has been seen, to a broad concept whose empirical content is complicated, unstable, and largely comparative. Avoiding complications like these, a common style of typologizing political system makes much of the notion of political culture. Political culture is the essential organic material of the political system. This is what gives content to its norms, values and objectives. The clear difficulty with political culture is that in the nature of the case one cannot typologize it in a precise or non-ideological way. In this manner it introduces quite as many problems as it solves.

A second major line of criticism of the Snyder scheme refers to the apparent emptiness of decision in that scheme. Tabulating the influences thought to be at work on decision-makers does not inform anyone about the kinds of decisions which are taken. Saying something about the nature of decisions involves saying something about what the decisions themselves are, and a theory of decision-making must include a generalization about the decisions the process produces. Snyder and his colleagues appear to meet this point thus: 'Indeed, all would be lost unless one could speak of patterns and systems. Patterns refer to uniformities and persistence of actions and sets of relationships . . . System in this context refers to the modes, rules, and nature of reciprocal influence which structure the interaction between states' (Snyder *et. al.*, 72–3) So decisions acquire substance in systems of interaction. It now emerges that the Snyder scheme attempts to suggest all possible relationships and all possible complexities of decisional situation and action path. The essence of the Snyder approach seems to be that it deliberately foreshadows theory of a totally comprehensive kind, for if the system of the international environment is to be linked coherently with the system of the internal environment, then the whole together must be grandly systematic. This assumption of the possibility of totally explanatory

theory is a feature of the Snyder approach which one may be further inclined to doubt. Nothing can be excluded from the global system. It is therefore concrete, not analytic. If one explains everything, one explains everything; one does not simply investigate, let us say, the possibilities of a balance of power system or of a loose bipolar system. Because it would require a global standpoint to do so, one cannot categorically say that an explanatory global system is impossible to construct, though one may intuit that it is so. But one can say that if an explanatory global system is conceptually possible, then it must be taken to refer to a concrete all-inclusive system.

As Easton has pointed out (1965, 37–45), the notion of a concrete system in a social science context is something of a contradiction in terms. No political or social structure can be conceived as containing a set of whole biological persons. The very concept of structure membership indicates that only part of the biological entity's behaviour is involved. Structure creates and depends on roles, and it is virtually impossible to conceive of a single-role person. In other words, all systems are analytic except the ultimate all-inclusive system, that is, the global system. The all-inclusive system contains the whole biological entity and all the relationships of that entity. But to what possible extent is the all-inclusive system of intellectual value? It must itself contain and relate all analytic systems. Yet it can have no environment. It can be compared with nothing except its own internal structures and sub-systems, to which it is strictly incomparable because they have environments while it has none. Inputs cannot come from any environment nor outputs proceed into any environment. If the system is not subject to comparison, if it has no boundary, and if, in consequence, there are no boundary-exchange functions, how can it be open to systematic analysis? If the ultimate concrete system can be conceived to exist, it is difficult to see how it can be replicated. If it cannot be replicated, its existence adds nothing to our understanding of it. It is therefore difficult to see what possible kind of scientific explanation can be produced by the notion of the all-inclusive system. Given this to be the case, the value of intermediate explanations said to depend on the all-inclusive explanations for their ultimate validity must be doubted.

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5

Strategies

It is a common criticism of much decision-making analysis that the only thing it leaves out of its categories is decision. It examines the world-view of decision-makers without mentioning the actual choices facing them, nor discussing strategies appropriate to selection among these choices. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine briefly some suggestions relating to the selection of courses of action by decision-makers. One cannot discuss the rationality of decision-makers without some concept of what constitutes rational choice. Explicit strategies of choice must attempt to provide the necessary criteria in generalized forms. It would be inconsistent to comment on actual choice in terms of its rationality or irrationality, or to explain choices in these terms, or to make recommendations about future choices, without examining the basis upon which one may judge what is rational.

Though decision-making analysis of the kind discussed in the previous chapter commonly makes few specific suggestions relating to strategies of action, it is contended here that no analytic scheme in the field of politics can fail to make recommendations of some kind, and that such recommendations are an intrinsic part of the analytic scheme in question. Sweeping categorizations of the Snyder kind place the decision-maker at the centre of a vast network of perceptions of values and environments, and at the summit of a choice-delineating set of institutional structures. The clear implication of this kind of conceptual arrangement is that the rational decision-maker acquaints himself with all alternatives, assesses their likely consequences, tabulates their alternative costs; he ponders his objectives, consults his values and those of his society. He is then in a position to

rank his alternatives, and rationality will dictate that he select the course yielding the maximum benefit at the least risk and cost. Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963, 35–57) have given this species of problem-solving the title 'synoptic', which is the term favoured here.

As an explanation of the nature of decision-making, the synoptic conception suffers from a number of defects. First, large problems are rarely presented to the decision-maker in clear outline, so that he can then make rational decisions aimed at solving them. A problem, if it is of any significance, is already part of the decision-maker's attitudes: the mind structures the problem over time. As a crude example, the President of the United States is not presented with the problem of the Cold War; the Cold War was already part of his outlook long before he became President. The notion that problems and possible solutions are brought together as two sides of an equation is thus, in most important cases, erroneous. Second, the synoptic implication that alternative policy solutions are scored against comprehensive values systems must be equally far from actuality. Policies reduce themselves at a specific moment in time to alternative actions, all probably of a limited rather than a sweeping kind. These actions—at the margins of policy as it were—are more likely to be compared on grounds of practicability. It is unlikely that large and sweeping policies can be aligned clearly with comprehensive value systems. Other objections apart, such a notion implies that policy decision is a rare and earth-shaking event, which is not what actuality usually suggests. On another plane, it can be objected that neither value systems nor alternative policy courses are likely to be so well organized that the conjunction of the two is likely to clarify matters very much. Third, two prominent decision-making analysts, Snyder and Paige (1958, 245–6), have in fact found in their study of the United States response to the invasion of South Korea that the decision-making process—

> . . . was not characterised by the consideration of multiple alternatives at each stage. Rather a single proposed course of action emerged from the definition of the situation and then was subject to critical scrutiny—not in comparison with other alternatives (except inferentially) but in the context of values, outcomes, costs, and so on . . . . Perhaps the hypothesis would be: when the decision-making process must be compressed into a short time period and the situation is a crisis thrust upon the decision-makers from outside, single alternatives will be considered. If this holds true, it suggests a different dialectic from that which is usually assumed.

Fourth, the synoptic description fails not merely to reflect the limited nature of alternatives, it is also apt to conceal the limited nature of the information collected to illuminate a problem. Of necessity decision-makers can only take in a small amount of information, and equally necessarily information-gathering agencies do not have the resources to collect all the information relevant to, let us say, the Korean decision. The fact of the matter is that decision-makers economize in all areas and they do in fact make intuitive judgements. The synoptic suggestion is neither economical nor intuitive.

Moving over to the synoptic approach as a recommendation to decision-makers, similar criticisms can be raised. There can be no point in making comprehensive suggestions to authorities who want to, and have to, economize. Men do not have the capacity to take in all the considerations that may be conceived to be relevant. Similarly, what is the point of urging policy-makers to consult value systems if such consultation is inconclusive or if nothing economical can be said about them? In the same sort of way, the synoptic suggestion places many items in distinct categories, values for example, which in the operational situation are an intrinsic part of the decision-maker's outlook. Urging decision-makers to be other than human would appear to be a questionable activity. It can also be argued that the decision-maker rarely confronts himself with 'a problem', particularly in the area of foreign policy. He will have in his mind large numbers of problems; and these problems may be related to large numbers of other problems in the minds of other decision-makers; and many possible decisions will be related in many complex ways. The synoptic proposal suggests little to resolve this actual complexity that does not add further complexities. It can be argued, then, that the decision-maker is not confronted by a closed system centred on one problem, but by a large number of open-ended, reverberating and connecting systems involving large numbers of related decisions available to himself and to others. So what the decision-maker needs is a strategy which will enable him to economize and which will enable him to move from one decision to the next in situations of shifting complexity, in which his information may be faulty or inadequate. This need, it seems, the synoptic suggestion can never meet.

The question of rational strategies of decision has received a great deal of academic attention in recent years. No attempt to formalize the decision-making situation of parties seeking their own advantage but unable to control the events yielding outcomes has been generally

more influential than games theory. The classic treatment of games theory by von Neumann and Morgenstern treats of general cases in highly mathematical terms. It cannot be the purpose of a short essay of this kind to attempt to summarize the scope of games theory in all its increasingly sophisticated mathematical forms: reading in this area is suggested at the conclusion of the present chapter. The intention here is confined to indicating some of the difficulties that arise in the attempted application of games theory to the problems of foreign policy. To this end some games theory terms must be crudely defined, but no attempt will be made to work through any part of the theory in its own mathematical terms.

Players play for advantage (though they may form coalitions to this end) in a game characterized by uncertainty: in general terms they do not know how other players will play, but it is assumed that all will play for advantage, which is normally conceived in monetary terms. So, generally, choice will not be entirely random. The player's problem is, quite obviously: What to do? What strategy to adopt? The object of games theory is to provide rules for the selection of strategies. From the viewpoint of policy no endeavour could be more relevant. Given a particular game, an ideally worked out strategy will give a player the proper response to every move of his opponent. Games yield 'imputations', that is, results for each player. Different sets of strategies yield different imputations, but one set of strategies may have more than one imputation, particularly where coalitions have been formed. An imputation 'dominates' another if it yields the greater gains (or smaller losses) to one or more players who are able to enforce it. A 'solution' is a set of imputations which dominate any other imputation but which are not themselves subject to mutual domination. Games theory attempts to find solutions. One complication (and it is not a small one in the present context) is that the more complicated games become, the more likely are they to have more than one solution. Indeed, games, in their own conceptual terms, may have an infinity of solutions.

'Minimax' is the most prominent rule of games theory. In a given situation the player considers the worst possible outcome for each strategy and selects that strategy which minimizes the worst that can happen; or, to put it the other way round, he maximizes his minimum gain. This is clearly a rule for pessimist conservatives. It certainly makes sense where one can assume that one's opponent wishes to make things as bad for one as possible. This is most clearly the case in the 'two-person zero-sum game', where there are two players and

what one gains the other loses. Given the same motivations, each player adopts the minimax rule, and they reach a solution at a 'saddle-point', where one maximizes his minimum gain, and the other minimizes his maximum loss. In a 'non-zero sum game' what one party loses is not what the other gains, and what one party gains is not what the other loses: which makes things very much more complicated. But even the two-person zero-sum game can be complex: it may be the case that the game is such that if one party chooses an orthodox minimax strategy, and if his opponent gets to know about this, then it may be possible for his opponent to better himself by selecting a strategy other than minimax. In this situation there seems to be no saddle-point and there may be no solution. However, von Neumann and Morgenstern have shown that in the case of mixed strategies both parties in a zero-sum two-person game should act to minimize their maximum *expected* loss. In this case the game does have a saddle-point and each party gets his expected loss. There is no incentive to change strategy even after discovering the nature of the opponent's strategy. This is because X minimizes his maximum loss with his chosen strategy; if Y changes his strategy this can only improve X's payoff; and by definition this will reduce the payoff to Y. This applies equally to each party.

If there are more than two parties in the game a new range of possibilities will be introduced. It is now likely that parties will form coalitions to win the game, and this, in turn, will involve the distribution of 'side-payments' to coalition members. So an individual participant will have to choose strategies relating to the game itself, to the formation of coalitions, and to the making of side-payments. In broad terms, the method of dealing with multi-person games is to consider all possible coalitions (with their side-payment problems) and attempt to solve the game for every given coalition on the basis of a two-person game. Obviously, the more parties to the game, the more complicated analysis becomes. In fact, immense complexities develop very quickly.

It will be readily appreciated that games theory can be, and is, carried to the most advanced levels of mathematical sophistication, and can be said to constitute a major study. It is no part of the purpose of this essay to examine games theory in its own right. The present intention is to consider its merits in the task of explaining and prescribing in the area of foreign policy. And here its precise relevance must be doubtful. Games theory extended to the scale of a global analogy, even if this were possible, would be of such com-

plexity in itself and of such indeterminacy in result as to be no kind of a substitute for more direct contemplation of global relations. Anyway, it can be well argued that games theory does not describe how people actually play games; it is at least arguable that some men play for the sake of the game (to keep the game going) rather than for the sake of specific rewards, which is the kind of human characteristic games theory has intrinsic difficulty encompassing. Similarly, men (or states) may not necessarily form a coalition to win a game and maximize side-payments. They may form a coalition because they think it right to do so. Games theory was originally elaborated as a contribution to economics, and gains and losses were primarily to be considered as financial. As a consequence, games theory of any purity finds motives other than the search for economic gain somewhat intractable. Loyalty, for example, is largely unknown in games theory. Similarly, different types of coalition are difficult for the games theorist to handle. In what sense, for example, do NATO and GATT share general coalition characteristics? Is the UN a coalition? In a formal sense it could be thought of as such, it being a combination to resist aggression. In another sense, the UN is not a coalition engaged in a game, it is a setting encompassing a variety of games. This is an intriguing thought, but it lacks all precision. What kind of games are played in the UN? What kind of imputations do strategies yield? Rarely are they financial. It might be better to hold that the UN is a rite rather than a game. Accepting the games analogy for a moment, it would seem to be the case that statesmen play a vast number of games at the same time; and the games, many yielding different kinds of results, all relate to one another. This sort of complexity cannot be handled convincingly in strict conceptual games terms.

However, the premise of the games position is suspect, for it is difficult to accept the image of statesmen as players of games. In any given situation, do statesmen know what game is being played? They must often be concerned with trying to define what the game is to be, what items are at stake, who opponents are, what bargains can be struck, and so on. And do they often define a game and play it? Perhaps this kind of analogy is appropriate to some areas of state activity—particularly, one would think, in matters relevant to trade and payments. Yet even here a great deal of attention is paid to working out what the game is to be. Again, in what sense do statesmen select a strategy in the games theory mode? Often they move from one exigency to the next, often they avoid selecting

a course of activity of any kind, often they move in tiny steps, deliberately evading long-term plans and strategies. So the descriptive authority of games theory is hardly overwhelming. As a prescription to statesmen it is equally suspect. If statesmen do not see themselves in games situations, they can hardly be expected to take much interest in games theory. And, deplorable though it may be, few statesmen are skilled in mathematics, and the remainder are unlikely to remedy their intellectual deficiencies in this area. This apart, it is gross distortion to view politicians as potential chess players on the largest scale. It is also something of a calumny. Many politicians live in a world both of interests and ideals. They may bargain but they also persuade; they may manipulate but they also lead. They may know themselves to be imperfect both in knowledge and ability, and they are almost certainly aware of the social and political limitations on consistent action of any kind.

All this, of course, does not undermine the position of games theory as an intellectual pursuit. Nor does it imply that games theory modes are not suggestive in the study of foreign policy and international politics. This cannot be so, for distinguished and enlightening works have been produced (particularly by Schelling) whose inspiration has been partially the product of familiarity with games theory. But it is the case that the closer games analysts come to political processes the further do they remove themselves from formal games theory. Bargaining in foreign policy sometimes produces partial 'solutions', in the sense that in some, probably very limited, area bargainers come to share appreciations and expectations about the matters involved in the bargaining procedure. But this is not a mathematical process and involves many matters of psychic motivation to which mathematical analysis may be utterly inappropriate. For example, the procedures and strategies of limited war may be illuminated by games theory, but one of the most important things about limited war is the nature of its limitations, and these may be arrived at in a highly imperfect psychological manner. Politics, whether national or international, is often about massive social emotions which may not be open to rational emendation. And, whatever games theorists may think, large numbers of people persist in believing that politics is about the way to the good life. Games theory of any purity has difficulty encompassing these large facts. If games theorists are led to believe that they do not exist, their suggestions may at best be irrelevant.

The synoptic decision-making model seemed to define rational

policy as sets of decisions made in the full light of information about values, circumstances and prospects. This notion is descriptively unreal, and as prescription must have totalitarian characteristics. Only the full-scale ideologist, banked by massive organization, can be certain that he is comprehensively informed and that the course he adopts is historically right. This notion of social rationality is clearly repugnant to the liberal tradition. The notion of strategy in the games theory sense is more rationalistic than rational. A politician in a complex, uninsulated, political situation attempting to act out a games strategy, if this were possible, would probably appear to be foolish and might appear to be wicked. A third possibility now presents itself which claims to be accurately descriptive and explanatory of political practice in democratic societies, and which offers the possibility of prescription which is neither immodest nor immoral. This approach has been called 'disjointed incrementalism' (see Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963, *passim*), *though* it might, in earlier times, have been called 'muddling through'.

The strategy, if such it may be called, of disjointed incrementalism may be briefly and broadly described as the essence of social and political modesty (see Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963, 81–110). Policy makers do not assume that they can execute broad schemes with a pliable social material. They exist in a complex, intractable, historical situation to which grand schemes do not apply: the city is there and cannot be knocked down to provide perfect traffic conditions. Policy makers consider alternative policies at the margins of social action. They consider conditions resulting from decisions as small increments to the *status quo*. They do not consider massive increments. These are undesirable, and, anyway, it is impossible to be sure that they could be achieved by policy decision. Small changes can be achieved, though it is impossible to be sure that they will be, and selection, where necessary, is made between such small changes. So policies likely to result in small changes to the *status quo* are the only policies considered. A similar approach is extended to values. The policy maker does not fix his mind on some large value such as liberty, then attempting, from a blue-print, its achievement. He considers whether one small change adds or detracts from liberty. He considers what other small changes are possible; and if he has to choose between, say, equality and liberty, it is only a very small marginal choice that he makes, and it can be readily changed or rescinded at a later stage. Choice between policy alternatives is made on the basis of choices between the marginal incre-

ments in social conditions likely to result. Conflicts occur in this context of marginality. Conflict is therefore not radical, and choice is not earth-shaking.

This is a rational form of policy-making in a complex social system where information is necessarily imperfect, where values are open to argument, where civilized social cohesion is set above ideological purity, and where it is impossible to work out all the possible consequences of choice. Action at the margin is likely to be reversible, it is unlikely to transgress well-supported values in any radical way, it is concerned with available means to which ultimate purposes are adapted. The incrementalist does not have fully worked-out objectives to which he bends himself and, so far as he is able, his society. He has both means and ends in sight, and they are mutually adjustable. Equally, the incrementalist is well adapted to adjust to fresh inflows of information. He does not close his mind to novel data nor does he blind himself to the fact that his choices may not have the results he anticipated. He does not delude himself with the idea that he can solve social ills, he merely works at them. He has no concept of an ideal society, but he is aware of some existing social problems and attempts to deal with these specific problems on a piece-meal basis. He attempts to reduce injustice, he does not attempt to create the just society. From an ethical viewpoint, incrementalism can probably best be associated with some kind of utilitarianism (*cf.* Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963, 203–44)—will this increment do more to improve our lot than that increment, given that not a great deal can be done immediately anyway?

Incrementalism is both descriptive and prescriptive, largely, of course, in relation to liberal pluralist societies. It is modest, it seems to avoid social and ideological cleavage, it is responsive to issues and conditions, it is attractive to practical, unfanatical men. It is also, in the nature of the case, somewhat conservative. It carries structural connotations. The incrementalist operates in a context where power and influence are diffused among large numbers of groups—parties, interests, corporations, bureaucracies, armies. Incrementalism recommends a give-and-take, equilibrium-maintaining, decision-making procedure in this structural situation. Mutual adjustment is the norm. Change seems to take second place to the security in society of strong groups. Efforts to introduce an ethical element into this prescription must be somewhat strained. If mutual adjustment is the key principle, the actual nature of the adjustment in policy terms must take second place. And those large sections of society which are not organized

into powerful groups may have very much less influence on decisions than numerically small groups which are wealthy, influential, and well organized. So it is quite possible to take moral objection to incrementalism and to the social and political processes it recommends.

Here incrementalism is considered in relation to foreign policy. Is it explanatory? In the case of some policies it would seem to be so. Appeasement before the Second World War clearly had incremental characteristics: the western powers, responsive to strong internal interests, adjusted to apparently piecemeal advances by Nazi Germany. Similarly, United States involvement in Vietnam could be partly explained in terms of its incremental characteristics. On the other hand, international relations are often marked by large-scale happenings with which incrementalism has little explanatory connection. Declarations of war are seldom incremental. The creation of a massive alliance, such as NATO, is not in essence a piecemeal set of events, though some of its implications may be worked out in a piecemeal fashion. Is incrementalism descriptive of the way in which foreign policy is made? In some circumstances, it clearly is. Much of the British Empire was acquired in an apparently piecemeal fashion. And many foreign economic policies are, reasonably, influenced by commercial interests, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Similarly, policies substantially influential upon a country's international position, particularly its armaments policies, may be very much subject to the twists and turns of mutual adjustment between powerful groups in the domestic environment. Yet it is often the case that foreign policy decisions do not have incremental characteristics. Sometimes they are taken secretly: the decisions taken by the President of the United States during the Cuban missiles crisis were not bandied about among numbers of interest groups. Sometimes, particularly in times of war, foreign policy decisions must be taken very quickly. And it is not uncommon for heads of government to attempt to reach decisions alone, or in collusion. Nor is the special nature of much foreign policy decision-making at all abnormal. Statesmen are often urged, as we have seen, to consult the national interest or the good of humanity rather than parties, pressure groups and civil servants in framing their international positions. And this kind of approach statesmen often find congenial. They are very prone to see a distinction of kind between foreign policy and domestic policy and to attempt to act accordingly. This is not an entirely unreasonable view, for there is a difference between confronting powerful, and possibly dangerous, foreign powers, and

confronting domestic interests in an atmosphere of mutual adjustment. That these two spheres of activity interact is clear, but that they are the same does not follow.

Does incrementalism stand up well as prescription in the area of foreign policy? In the relations of liberal pluralist communities, many of whose internal groups will have strong international connections and many of whose internal political arrangements will be similar, incrementalism may have attractions in some areas, particularly, perhaps, in financial and commercial matters. But in general terms, incrementalism would seem to have little to offer. For wherever incrementalism appears to be appropriate it would seem to function within the context of past policy decisions taken on a non-incremental basis. For example, it might be held that decisions in the context of the International Monetary Fund should be, and have to be, taken on an incremental basis; however, the decisions which resulted in the establishment of the IMF could hardly be described as incremental, without depriving that word of distinctive meaning. It is the case that, from time to time, statesmen do attempt to execute grand designs. In this style they can create large organizations such as the League of Nations or the United Nations. Of course creations like these do not come out of nothing; they must be related to some existing ideas and practices. They are nevertheless departures and not increments. They rarely achieve the wholesale reforms their creators may have intended, but they do have immense influences on world politics, though some of these influences may be almost the opposite of those intended. Large-scale decisions with results such as these cannot be reversed. One could not forget that the United Nations had existed. World politics do not move wholly in reversible increments. Vast upheavals of one kind or another are probably more typical. How are men to deal with such a disorderly and dangerous environment if not by large-scale efforts aimed at its control? If action of this kind is appropriate, the incremental prescription is useless and, perhaps, harmful. In fact politicians do take, or attempt to take, large-scale positions in foreign policy. In most polities their fellow citizens would roundly condemn them were they not to make such attempts. A parliamentary assembly may often demand to know what its country's foreign policies are: to receive the reply that policies are incremental would be likely to instigate scenes of some excitement.

It does not follow that foreign policies can be pursued in a pure form. Adjustments take place in the various and disorganized

environment of world politics. But adjustment does not invalidate policy. In the contrary sense, it can be argued that it is only policy which can validate adjustment. Adjustment without policy may be disastrous folly. An incremental approach to an overseas commitment in the absence of a deliberated policy decision as to the desirability or otherwise of such a commitment may have extremely non-incremental results for a country drafting in this way. It could hardly be reasonably denied that the world contains many states whose leaders take a far from incremental view of politics. The incremental suggestion may be relevant and congenial in a situation where all the main participants are inclined to accept mutual adjustment as a way of running their affairs and where they are strong enough in combination to frustrate any party prone to reject the legitimacy of incremental processes. In the international arena it is however the case that non-incremental participants may be very strong indeed; and where they are weak may nevertheless be very influential. Mutual adjustment with non-incremental partners is unlikely to be mutual. In fact, regard for one's own interests in a situation where non-incremental parties dominate may seem to require a firm and long-term policy. The alternative might be destructive of any kind of adjustment. So, though it may be argued that incrementalism can be appropriate to a pluralist community, it can rarely be held that such a community should extend this attitude to its relations with all other powers in the context of a suspicious and, in part, hostile environment.

The mutual adjustment of interests as a mode appropriate to the conduct of domestic politics is sometimes found repugnant on the grounds that it is a style likely to ignore large moral issues, that it tends to overlook the individual who does not operate as a part of a negotiating organization, and that it seems based on the view that the mutual adjustment of interests takes place against a background of inactivity on the part of the majority of citizens. It may also be rejected because it is descriptively inaccurate. Etzioni (1968, 268–73) particularly rejects incrementalism on both these sets of grounds. More unusually, he proposes an alternative to it. He asserts that actors in many actual situations, aware of the impossibility of synoptic rationality, resort not to disjointed incrementalism but to 'mixed-scanning' (Etzioni, 1968, 282–305). A mixed-scanner differentiates 'contextuating (or fundamental) decisions from bit (or item) decisions' (Etzioni, 283). Fundamental decisions, and reviews of fundamental decisions, thus provide the context within which small-

scale decisions may be made on a small-scale, incremental basis. This view, argues Etzioni, is often descriptively accurate. It is also a good way of doing things. The notion of context-setting decisions corrects the conservative drift of incrementalism, whereas the notion of small, within-context decisions of an incremental kind counteracts the unreality of attempts to reach the synoptic ideal of rationality in human affairs. The mixed-scanner surveys his situation, selects those questions which are context-setting, decides how to allocate his time and resources to context and within-context arrangements, and, as he proceeds, tests out various inter-level combinations in action. As he scans for context-setting problems he absorbs and evaluates information, and quickly evaluates alternative decisions. These are not separate processes but intrinsic to the selection of alternatives.

Etzioni suggests (289) that most incremental or bit decisions do in fact relate to fundamental decisions, even though in practice the fundamental decisions may not have been deliberated: in other words, most incremental decisions have a cumulative effect which is not incremental. Etzioni relates mixed-scanning to a number of structural features which are not central to the scope of this essay. It is sufficient for present purposes to indicate that this strategy of decision-making implies a kind of hierarchy of levels among scanners, those at the top scanning for fundamental decisions, while those lower down scan for implementative or preparatory incremental decisions. And Etzioni suggests that in those societies where there is a high level of consensus, where social and political communications are good, and where societal units have been mobilized positively into the political process, fundamental decisions affecting the course and structure of society can be made and implemented. In those societies where these conditions do not apply, fundamental decisions may be unrealistic, may not be tackled at all, may stand no chance whatever of implementation, or may be chaotically related to incremental decisions.

The mixed-scanning approach is not dissimilar from the traditional military distinction between strategy and tactics; nothing is tactically sound if it is not strategically significant. Even more mundanely, the distinctions of mixed-scanning are those recurrently propounded in, for example, British political life: the cabinet and cabinet ministers consider broad principles, while the civil service operates incrementally within the context of these principles and notifies ministers when issues of principle are likely to crop up. Similarly, specialist

committees of the House of Commons (real or imaginary) should examine the detailed work of ministries, leaving discussions on major principles to the cabinet and Parliament. The difficulty with approaches of this kind is that in a given case it may be impossible to decide what is a context-setting issue and what is not. For example, who or what in the United Kingdom during the 1940s and 1950s decided that British foreign policy should not include direct and enthusiastic participation in efforts towards European unity? It would be impossible to pin this choice on a particular person or body at a particular time: yet it was certainly discussed and it was certainly a context-setting decision. Equally, it is often impossible to find agreement as to whether a particular issue is an issue of principle, and, if so, what principle is involved. Was British withdrawal from Aden an incremental adjustment to economic circumstances at home and political circumstances in the area concerned, or was it a major issue of principle? If it was an issue of principle, what was the principle? Obligation to some portions of the indigenous population? Maintenance of some British interest? Was it related in principle to the psychological desirability of withdrawing from empire? The possibilities are almost endless. It would seem to be the case that often nobody knows what is a context-setting question of principle and what is not, though most people may be prepared to debate the issue in specific cases. Again, in specific cases, argument often arises as to what principle, or context, is relevant. These questions are debated, where debate is possible. Decision is sometimes taken on various grounds, including, maybe, the ground that the decision is incremental and the ground that it is context-setting. To assert that mixed-scanning is what does, and should, take place misses the point. What does, and should, take place is argument. And the statement of the strategy of mixed-scanning does not contribute very much to argument.

Second, there is nothing very novel in the notion that some societies are better able to take enlightened policy decisions about their nature and purposes than others. This is partly a lesson of experience, because the reverse was long a popular notion in liberal and radical circles and was one of the reasons why optimistic liberals of the earlier part of the present century were so keen that liberal democratic institutions should be spread as wide as possible among both developed and under-developed peoples. The difficulty with this was that many social structures were shown to be unable to sustain a democratic superstructure, and, more disastrously, some countries,

such as Nazi Germany, gave themselves a popular sense of direction much to the detriment of other countries with more confused aims, whose peoples had greater difficulty in defining context-setting questions. When men seize hold of a political context too hard they assert a knowledge of principle which they cannot have: they therefore try to make a reality out of an illusion, with all the miserable consequences with which mankind is familiar. Incrementalism, for all its faults, cannot be totalitarian.

Finally, it is broadly and usually the case that no one government can take a clear context-setting decision in the arena of international relations as a whole, though, from time to time, individual governments do make futile and sometimes damaging attempts to do so. Most conceivable context-setting decisions have to be taken by substantially more than one government; and actual decisions of this kind are relatively rare. It is therefore in a sense true that most foreign policy decisions must be approached incrementally in the context of international relations as a whole. Yet it is undeniably the case that decisions made within the setting of the international system may be distinctly large and contextual within one individual political system. A state may decide, for example, to adopt a policy of nuclear deterrence because of what it conceives to be the nature of its international environment. In one sense, then, this decision is simply incremental in an international context of nuclear-armed states. From another standpoint, such an increment may be potentially catastrophic. And within the state concerned, the same decision is likely to be far from incremental; it is in fact likely to involve large questions to do with the allocation of public resources and will carry in train large numbers of relatively minor decisions. On the other hand, a decision by a state to initiate discussions on the setting up of, say, some international organization to control arms, may conceivably be contextual in international affairs. But in the domestic situation such a decision might pass relatively unnoticed for all its possible importance. So it would appear that the merits of the distinction between context-setting and within-context decisions in domestic terms may be submerged in considerable complexities of interpretation as the scale of the context is increased.

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part two

The units of foreign policy

6

States

The notion of the state has both normative and descriptive dimensions. Until recent decades it was a common view that political science, the study, as it were, of political facts, should concentrate on the state, since it was the state, with sovereign territorial power, which provided both the setting and the objectives of political action. It was the state which integrated large-scale societies and expressed their interest, dignity, and strength before the audience of the world. The state was descriptively real and therefore the proper, and perhaps the only, material of the science of politics. On the normative side, the idea of the sovereign state represented, at its inception towards the end of the middle ages, an urge to reform the disorderly condition of European society. The combination of the notions of lordship and kingship with the notion of the spiritual authority of the Church meant, in effect, that men were subject to multiple jurisdictions. The balances implied in this arrangement became increasingly unstable during the later middle ages, leading men into complicated and terrifying moral and physical conflicts. Rule could not provide security. The equation of sovereignty and the state constituted a major reform of this system, if such it could be called. And the state did in fact succeed in providing security within large-scale societies to a degree virtually unknown since the collapse of the Roman Empire. This ideal notion of the state came under attack as other values, the pursuit of individual human happiness for example, came to be held in the eighteenth century and later to take precedence over the enjoyment of the social stability provided by a unitary and

sovereign jurisdiction. Though both the descriptive and normative notions of the state have been under severe attack for substantial periods of time, the state, descriptively, and, for many people, normatively, has survived. Common usage alone (and the usage of this essay) establishes it as the unit of foreign policy, the item from which foreign policy emanates and towards which it is primarily directed. It is now necessary to examine this usage, first in a descriptive setting and later in a normative setting.

Astonishingly, given the international horrors which the present century has produced, the main developments of twentieth century political science have not, until very recently, taken place in the field of international relations. Contemporary political science has become largely equated with the study of political processes within the context of the national political system, not the international system. Politics in this sense is an aspect of social activity as a whole, and is not to be restricted to the workings of the institutions of the sovereign state. So there has been a substantial shift away from the legalist concerns associated with the state (the procedures of institutions, the rule of law and the like), to the more informal attitudes, processes, and groupings upon which the institutions of state rest and from which these institutions draw their vigour and relevance, where they are vigorous and relevant. This emphasis on the informal aspects of the political system must clearly have had an impact on the study of foreign policy, for if the state is regarded as secondary to the political process, then policy must be more conditioned by informal arrangements than by the impedimenta of the state.

It thus becomes possible to think of the world as being, from a political viewpoint, a large and complex field of political activity. There will, it is true, be concentrations of this activity in what used to be called states, and on a general map of the field these will show up as dark patches made up of many flows of political influence. But these concentrations are not self-contained. Many connections will exist with other such concentrations of influence, and only very occasionally will these lines be resolved into one line of mutual social hostility between two political systems. More typically, there will be large numbers of connections indicative of the activities of international corporations, professional organizations, organizations involving the co-operation of national and international civil servants, organizations dealing with large-scale movements of mail, trade and diseases, and so on through a vast range of activities and interests beyond the state.

It is clear that the modern idiom of political studies has undermined the validity of the notion of the state in domestic terms. But what becomes of foreign policy and international relations without the state? States appear to maintain military forces of unexampled destructive capacity; states appear to organize and maintain foreign ministries, embassies, and delegations to a host of international organizations; states conduct negotiations, sign and ratify treaties, and occasionally arrange wars; states supervise spying, the avoidance of treaty obligations, the preparation of gases, viruses and modes of slaughter generally unknown; they give and receive loans, they are financial units of account in international trade and payments; they organize and try to maintain currencies and exchange rates; they engage in tariff wars, tariff negotiations, customs unions and all manner of activities designed to increase the wealth of their people and, if possible, give them an advantage over others. At times men appear willing to die at the command of the state, and the state, at times, appears eager to receive services of this kind. One could exhaust oneself in an attempt to cover all the possibilities of apparent state action and all the uses to which the concept of the state appears to be put. The state refuses to be extinguished. This does not mean that states are sole actors in the international arena, nor does it mean that political science is somehow perverted when its practitioners give so much of their energy to the study of group behaviour, attitude formation and suchlike. But it can be argued that in international relations the political system, with all its stresses and balances, its formal and informal institutions and rules, reduces itself to the fact of the state. Is it not the state, and the state alone, which gives a people a status and position in the eyes of the world? If this is not actually the case, it is astonishing how many people feel that it is. Are not parades, flags, crowns the means whereby men honour the state and identify themselves with it? Cannot corrupt politicians be transformed into grandiloquent patriots by an office of state? Do not men compete for the honour of holding the flag? It would seem beyond contention that men give the state meaning, particularly in their international relations, and political science has to lump it regardless of whether it finds it silly or inaccurate.

It remains true, of course, that states are abstractions, though powerful ones, and this alone is sufficient to create formidable conceptual difficulties when states are treated as the prime actors on the international stage. They become endowed almost inevitably with human emotions, motives, even physiques. France is angered by the

actions of Egypt, Britain is alarmed to find an artery threatened, Russia continues to grow, Egypt yearns for higher status, America is worried about the wild behaviour of her friends, Australia is loyal to her mother-country, China fishes in troubled waters. It is unlikely that men will stop referring to states in this way, and it therefore becomes necessary to enquire into the validity of this image of the world. First, it must be the case that if the states-as-actors approach is to yield any general insights into foreign policy it must be assumed that states have generally similar traits. In just the same way, general insights into the predicament of men must assume men to have similar psychological dispositions, though obviously different traits will be given different weights in the behaviour of different individuals, such differences being accounted for, perhaps, by differences of background, circumstances and inheritance. Similarly, if states are to be thought of as men they must have some humanlike characteristics. They must be capable of fear, of anger, of satisfaction; they must make choices, have preferences, deliberate, act. And states must not merely be somewhat human in this way, they must also experience common motivations. They must be on the look-out for gain, they must be reluctant to part with possessions, they must desire power and wealth. In common usage these propositions are often taken to be so self-evident as to require no explanation or elaboration. It is useless to enquire into the truth or falsehood of assumptions such as these. More importantly, one may enquire into the conditions which may validate such assumptions as analytic tools; and one may equally suggest some invalidating circumstances.

It is incontestable that the state cannot be observed to act. A newcomer to this planet, unacquainted with the notion of the state, could observe only the actions of men and machines, groups of which could be observed to organize themselves in a complex manner apparently based on common language and commonly valued symbols. The states-as-actors view requires that men should be so conditioned by the concept of the state that when acting in its name they give to it the character of an autonomous quasi-human entity existing in an environment dominated by other, similar, quasi-human entities. So compulsive is this situation on human conduct that generalizations can be made about the activity of states that will hold regardless of changes among the occupiers of state offices or roles. This view can be supported in two ways (see Wolfers, 1962, 3–24). First, it can be held that the impulses and motivations ascribed to the state are those common in human individuals; so when individuals occupy state roles

they do not act abnormally, it is merely that their actions and emotions attach to a far larger entity, the body represented by and, to some degree, controlled by the state, than would otherwise be the case. This enlargement of scale and identification does not fundamentally alter human traits, which can thus be readily attached to the state as an actor. Second, it can be held that the world arena is dominated, at all its more important points, by states and the relations between states. The statesman does not therefore find himself in an environment that can be moulded to his own selected pattern. He is the victim of a grave, perhaps pathological, delusion if he attempts to act as if this were so. The past, certainly the immediate past, cannot be forgotten. The environment of states is a dangerous environment. States are not, as a rule, pliable material in the hands of other states. A state feeling itself threatened may resort to a wide range of harmful activities. This is not a situation where individual idiosyncrasies may be strongly indulged. In a bad flood those who wish to survive must resort to boats, which can only be manipulated in certain limited ways. In the world at large, men resort to states, and these also have their own built-in limitations. And when a boat takes water all other considerations take low priority compared with the standard actions to avert catastrophe. In just the same way, when the state is threatened the statesman responds to what appear to be the necessities of this situation. The more compelling the situation, the more predictable the actions of states. Regardless of a generally high-minded stance in such matters, India will resort to war with, say, Pakistan if vital interests seem to be at stake; and these vital interests will be determined by India, not by some outside body. Where core values are not at stake, states may act more flexibly, though not necessarily less predictably. No agricultural state can afford to ignore the interests of its farmers in negotiations on agricultural tariffs, though in this case it might be more pliable than it would be if it were under attack in some more fundamental way. Similarly, attitudes bred by geography and long historical experience are unlikely to disappear from a state's policies simply because the item under consideration is not of prime survival importance or because of changes among the officers of state. Of all the many changes brought about by the Russian Revolution the changes in Russian foreign policy are possibly the least remarkable: the idiom may change but the substance remains fairly constant.

The states-as-actors model propounds some general traits and motivations common to all states. With this premise and given the

situation in which states find themselves, a number of simple explanatory generalizations may be readily suggested (see Wolfers, 1962, 9–24). For example, one might say that no state will readily surrender a power advantage or a vital interest to another potentially hostile state. This may be taken to explain the United States decision to resist North Korea in 1950, or British entry into the Second World War. Similarly, one might suggest that no state will readily give up an advantage to itself or a possession of some kind in the absence of a return benefit of comparable value: this explains most international bargaining. A state whose vital interests are not touched adversely will be prepared to consider the possibility of general arrangements for the conduct of relations between some or even all states, usually provided that the interference of other states in its own internal affairs is not encouraged thereby: this explains United States participation in the founding and subsequent development of the United Nations. A state feeling itself under severe threat will take all possible measures to secure its defences: this explains the United Kingdom's acquisition of thermonuclear devices and numerous other powers' inclination to equip themselves with nuclear arsenals. And so on. Common usage emphasizes states as actors, and the simple generalizations yielded by this framework appear to have some explanatory power. Contraventions of these generalizations would appear to constitute deviant cases requiring special explanations.

But how seriously should one take this view of foreign policies and international relations? Do the generalizations which this view engenders yield any measure of foresight into world events? First, it can be staunchly argued that statements about the desire of states for possessions and their inclination to defend core interests are so broad as to produce little beyond banal predictions of meagre practical or intellectual interest, which often obscure the processes which go into the making of foreign policy. For example, in what sense does the generalization that states defend core interests explain United States involvement in the Korean War? Before the event few people knew that Korea touched a core American interest, indeed the American Secretary of State had suggested otherwise. The *status quo* in Korea became a core interest after the war began and was only defined relatively late in the proceedings. Similarly, in what sense does this generalization explain the United Kingdom's attack on Egypt in 1956? If a core interest was involved it is difficult to see what it was; in fact, prolonged closure of the Suez Canal has become a feature of international life which large sections of British opinion have met with

an apparently implacable indifference. Again, what core interest was the Soviet Union defending when she invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968? Did she genuinely fear a NATO advance? Or was it the future disposition of Czechoslovakian economic resources which concerned her? Was it the ideological implications of Czech affairs which threw her into a condition of violent alarm? No authoritative answer to these questions is available. But it would seem at least likely that Soviet leaders differed in their views about the implications of Czech liberalization for their country and its official political religion. Nor does it seem entirely outrageous to suggest that no straightforward answer to these questions was possible, either for observers or participants, at the time or is possible now. The major point about interests which the states-as-actors approach tends to obscure is that they can seldom be clearly defined. They are the subject of dispute within all but the most authoritarian systems. Nobody knows what British interests are; argument revolves on this and associated points. In part at least British interests are defined by British actions, and these are sometimes taken with mixed motives, in the face of internal opposition, to meet a situation which may not actually exist. American interests in Korea have appeared to vary during the period since 1945. There is nothing unusual in this. The nature of American interests is the subject of a debate which will continue, one may legitimately hope, while the United States remains a political system.

A further objection to viewing states as actors is that it may tend to blind one, though it seldom does, to the impact of the individual personalities of statesmen. It would seem at least likely that the course of British foreign policy in 1956 would have differed had, say, Gaitskell or Butler, or someone other than Eden, headed the British government. And the simple fact that Truman, rather than Wallace, chanced to be Vice-President of the United States at the death of F. D. Roosevelt had the most fundamental effects on American foreign policy in the later 1940s, a period during which American interests were re-defined to a large pattern. Who could deny that Germany under Hitler pursued her interests, and discovered others previously unknown, in a style completely at variance from that of Hitler's predecessors? The individual impact of de Gaulle's presidency upon French foreign policy is virtually an orthodoxy of world opinion. The difficulty with suggestions such as these is, of course, that they cannot be maintained with absolute confidence because at the relevant periods the men in question held office, and it is impossible to re-run the proceedings under alternative conditions for comparative purposes. Yet it

would clearly invalidate much of the political process, and much of life itself, to believe that the individuality of holders of state roles is of no importance. Men as individuals compete for office and obtain office. Everyone behaves as if personality were important, not something which disappears before the compelling needs of the state. Unfortunately for modern analysts this feature of life and of politics introduces items such as leadership, moral weakness, accident, and the like, and bestows upon them the utmost importance. Modern political analysis is not always designed to deal with influences and suppositions of these kinds, which, in some opinions, come close to the actual stuff and texture of politics.

Third, it may be objected, questions of individual personality apart, that the continuity of the state's foreign policy can be much exaggerated. The states-as-actors approach must incline its adherents to a notion of the continuity of the concerns of the state. How else can such a view remain coherent over time? And strenuous efforts may be made to support statements of the utmost generality about a state's foreign policy. National character often figures among the data of continuity. Yet how strong is the evidence of the unchanging nature of foreign policy? The similarities between United States foreign policy since the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and United States foreign policy before the Second World War, when isolation was an objective almost achieved, are entirely crushed beneath the weight of dissimilarities. Discontinuities in French foreign policy since 1945 are, in the same way, more remarkable than its continuities over this short period. And which western power is not given to frequently recurrent periods when fresh departures are considered, assumptions queried, instruments of policy examined? What statesman in his right mind would assume the policies of the powers to be the same next year as they are this? So it would seem again that men do in fact act on the assumption that things can change. Often wars occur because things are changing or because they have not changed enough. If an essential feature of foreign policy is its changeability, it would seem futile to cling to a view of the world which tends to the opposite position. Additionally, if one is interested in predicting the course of change, it is clear that one must look deeply into units of action other than the state. States alone as actors will not provide enough material to explain why foreign policy changes so frequently; one would, for example, certainly need to look at major political and social movements and their determinants.

Fourth, the view that states are actors implies, as suggested earlier,

that states are far more concerned with securing their own interests than with organizing the environment within which they operate, and that they are always on their guard against interference in their internal affairs. That this view is an extreme one is quickly revealed by relatively brief contemplation of contemporary international relations. Much activity in this area takes place in international organizations of one kind or another, and much of this activity has the result, if not the intention, of affecting the internal arrangements of states. It would be absurd to argue that the activities organized, let us say, by the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank have no implications for the internal arrangements of participating states. Indeed these organizations must take a close and professional interest in internal affairs. For all the attempts made in its Charter and in its daily running to prevent the UN from discussing internal arrangements, it never fails to do so if a sufficient strength of feeling exists among the generality of states. And the treaty of the European Economic Community makes specific arrangements for interference in internal affairs, though these provisions have not been convincingly observed during the life of EEC thus far. While it is probably true that some states guard their frontiers, materially and ideologically, with greater zeal than others, this in itself is not a sufficient basis for sweeping generalizations about the selfishness of states. One could argue, in the opposite sense, that many statesmen do not draw a strong distinction between their own interests and the nature of arrangements between states, nor, in some circumstances (economic primarily), between their own internal arrangements and the internal arrangements of other states. As an extreme example, it would probably be true to say of Woodrow Wilson and his obsessive support for the League of Nations that he saw no validity in such distinctions; the League was in the American interest and there could be no question of its being detrimental to the American interest. Similarly, though at a lesser level of intensity, F. D. Roosevelt appeared to pursue the project of the United Nations as an American interest. And, in this case, it could be argued that, at Yalta particularly, he attached such importance to this project that more direct American interests were positively neglected. It may be felt that these statesmen, and others cast in a similar mould, were misguided, and so it is often contended, but in the present context such examples undermine the descriptive and explanatory validity of the states-as-actors approach, when this is extended to include general assertions about the self-regarding nature of the goals of state activity.

Objections to the states-as-actors view which concentrate on the importance of the idiosyncracies of individual statesmen are commonly countered by reference to the compulsive nature of the international environment. When war threatens men see to their defences regardless of personality differences. At the level of crude challenge this argument carries some conviction. Trapped in a blazing building, my behaviour would probably differ very little from that of anyone else, though even in this extremity there is likely to be some small scope for the exercise of ingenuity or special knowledge. However, special cases of this kind rarely occur. Clearly, at the state level, there is an environment full of challenges and dangers. But men are rarely able to agree about the precise nature of these challenges. An environment is not compelling if the nature of its challenge is open to doubt. As an example, it may reasonably be said that the international environment today differs substantially from what it was before 1914; but the precise nature of the differences, and the corresponding nature of their compulsions, could be argued indefinitely. Again, Acheson's assertion that it was more a necessity than a decision that led the United States to develop thermonuclear weapons (see Wolfers, 1962, 14) may perhaps be accepted as an instance of almost automatic response to what may have appeared as extreme danger. But since the emergence of thermonuclear devices and their associated delivery mechanisms the kinds of challenges offered by the international setting have become progressively more problematical, so that many contending arguments may be offered, for example, on the question of the United States deployment of an anti-missile system—whether it is necessary, and, if so, what form it should take. From a more general standpoint, is the international arena dominated by the mutual deterrence of the two great powers? If so, what is the nature of this deterrence situation and are any advantages offered to other states by it? How may such advantages best be achieved? These questions are central to decisions about responses to the challenges of the international system. Yet none of them can reasonably be held to have a determinate solution. So in fact the international environment falls short of compelling particular courses of action upon statesmen except at rare moments of extreme and urgent danger.

If the notion of the state is descriptively vulnerable, it would be fair to say that its normative force has suffered almost to the point of extinction. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the idea of the sovereign state spoke hopefully to the condition of men involved in the collapse of European medieval society. To its most forceful

advocate and theorist, Jean Bodin, only too aware of the horrors of factional religiosity in an environment where the sovereignty of secular rulers had not been conceptually disentangled from the notion of the spiritual authority of the Church, social order and legality were values of the highest priority. It followed that in every given territory sovereignty must be united in one, clear, secular authority. Legal order, or, in a slightly different sense, legal rights, must depend upon the sovereign state, within which there could be no separate or contending sovereignties. Legal order, social coherence, required a single jurisdiction. As the wars of religion ended the age of absolutism began. The ultimate secular authority of princes was generally recognized, and in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) it was confirmed that princes could also regulate the religious observances of their subjects. Absolutism is a term covering many complexities and obscurities, not least, as an example, the location of sovereignty in England, but it substantially denotes a situation in western Europe where sovereign rulers exercised, theoretically and actually, the unchallengeable right of law-making. The state was sovereign and the ruler was the state. From the later part of the eighteenth century the normative propositions behind this situation were subject to stronger and stronger attack, one of the earliest, and certainly the most powerful of these being mounted by Rousseau. The notion of popular sovereignty, revolutionary in eighteenth century France, has become a sometimes insipid orthodoxy of the twentieth century. Most governments now justify their rule not by reference to their position in relation to the sovereign state, but by their position as representatives of sovereign peoples. And within the political process, where this exists, it is virtually impossible to locate sovereignty in any determinate body, group or institution. Watkins (1968, 154) concludes:

> Where communism does not prevail, the words to conjure with are 'people', 'country', 'nation', and 'race'. Few people today would regard obedience to the state, as such, as the highest form of duty. Bodin's theory of the state as the ultimate value of politics is practically extinct.

Yet the argument that the normative notion of the state, with all its ramifications, is otiose, is not one that can be accepted without qualification. The twin ideas of the internal and external sovereignty of the state evolved simultaneously. A truly sovereign power, the giver of law within the state, must show itself to be its own master in the international setting. The idea of the state as master of itself still has much force in international life, and lies at the heart of many

of the forms of western traditional diplomacy. And in the United Kingdom, for example, the terms 'state' and 'sovereignty' occur so often in public life that one might reasonably fail to realize that they refer to defunct ideas. One might perversely argue that they refer to continuing problems of international relations and that the time appropriate for their abandonment is still long distant. Statesmen, while in office, are commonly in a position where they are better able than anyone else to control the mechanisms generally called the state. These mechanisms include military force, perhaps of horrifying potentiality. Statesmen are also commonly the products of, and the guardians of, a legal order of some kind, which order finds its proper substance in a civilized society. Statesmen do have power; and some have power beyond the dreams of any seventeenth century monarch, since they may be able to destroy other nations in their entirety. And statesmen must logically concern themselves with the safety and well-being of the legal order of which they are a part, and which, in a sense, created them as statesmen. They are not in a position which sets them entirely apart from the concerns of traditional theorists of the sovereign state. They operate, in general terms, in an internal legal order, while externally they are perennially subject to the fear of an environment which has in the past shown itself to be brutish and may again become so. Foreign policy has a moral responsibility, even, it can be argued, a moral direction. The analysis of foreign policy must touch upon moral questions, and therefore upon questions concerned with sovereignty.

The moral predicament of statesmen and the question of sovereignty are connected in two broad ways. First, where the moral problem is conceived to relate to the situation in which the statesman sees himself as involved in a number of kinds of order (an order within the state and an order, or orders, between states) the question of sovereignty is raised, often explicitly so, in political dialogue. Second, where the statesman sees himself confronted by a brutal situation which appears to demand action of an immoral kind (cheating, lying, killing, stealing) the question of the moral status of the sovereign state, and of the order upon which it depends and which it protects, may be a question at the very forefront of political actuality. The notion of sovereignty unites force with order. The sovereign holds the monopoly of the use of rightful force. The sovereign is a legal entity, a system within which men enjoy rights yet at the same time obey the commands, the laws, of the sovereign (the prince, the people, the state). This kind of a notion of sovereignty causes great difficulty

where order between states is involved. For Hobbes the sovereign state has no superior. It exists in an environment occupied by its structural equals, who are ready at any time to attack it. Order in this kind of situation is to be equated with fear. In the eyes of a modern Hobbes, the interests of states may produce an order, a balance of power: but the essence of this order is the fear of destruction should the balance be disturbed. The state may know fear but it does not know another source of law.

This general view of the relations between states was questioned during the lifetime of Hobbes by Grotius, the founder of international law in the age of the nation-state. The notion that a legal order depends upon authority, the unity of force and legality, was one with which Grotius was not sympathetic. He pointed out, as a matter of fact, that states do not live exclusively in a brutish Hobbesian style. They are not entirely dominated by a desire for power and a concern for selfish interests. International friendships are made and can endure. This simple observation is linked to a wider point, that law is not chained to authority, that legal order can exist between equals. States can, do, and should, obey laws which are not the commands of a sovereign. States cannot obtain lasting advantage and stability in an environment without law. They may, and should, construct legal systems whose authority is consent. For Grotius law of this kind is ultimately confirmed, it cannot be enforced, by natural law, which at the time was, and still is, an essentially religious conception. Law might be created by consent, but it had to be validated by a higher authority and in the absence of a sovereign, a higher kind of law had to serve. Grotian thinking has been much developed since its inception, and in a century when religious feeling often attaches to almost anything except religion, the relationship between natural law and international law has been much weakened.

But however secular the notion of the plurality of legal systems becomes, the predicament of practical statesmen is in no way simplified. The fact of the matter is that a legal order based entirely on consent is not enforceable. The basic acceptance of the central status of consent must entail the concept of the possible withdrawal of consent. States may create a legal order but they can never be sure that it will last, and, more importantly, they can never be sure that it will protect them if called upon to do so. A law based purely on equality and consent must be open to interpretation by each equal consenting partner. So, though an individual statesman may agree to a legal order (the United Nations system, for example) and may be

thoroughly convinced of its desirability, he would be foolish to commit himself to it utterly, whatever the strength of the support coming from his constituents. But if he reserves his position, he must expect his partners to do likewise. The possibility of more intense international commitment is heightened where small groups of nations link themselves in an order not centrally concerned with physical security, whose benefits are desired by many directly participating groups, not merely by governments. There would, for example, seem to be no intrinsic reason why the legal order currently, and tentatively, evolving in the European Economic Community should not endure, particularly as some of its sanctions may operate against large international corporations to whose interests individual states may feel no particular commitment. But though it is formally the case in EEC that participating states commit themselves utterly and indefinitely to the legal order they create, there can be no doubt in fact that there are no sanctions, other than a possible degree of economic disadvantage, against withdrawal.

No man can withdraw from the legal order of the state except by suffering physical sanction, or the risk of physical sanction, or by removing himself to some remote part of the world. This condition does not exist in any international legal order, except in the most indefinite way. The argument that Nazi Germany suffered sanctions because she transgressed the prohibitions of the western legal order, is one that is unlikely to carry weight with practical statesmen, particularly if they are central Europeans. The notion of the plurality of legal systems, for all its undeniable attractions for western liberals, is full of risks and moral conundrums. The risks are clear. They are intrinsic to the destruction of the equation of sovereignty and legal order. A major conundrum is that an international legal order cannot be a fully serious proposition without the commitment of states; yet if states are fully committed they cease to be states in the traditional sense since they may cease to be sovereign in their own territories. This involves, should it occur, the disappearance of sovereignty, for sovereignty cannot, in its nature, be divided, as Bodin pointed out. Any such outcome might entail a return to the confusing and insecure pluralism with whose bloody and disastrous consequences Bodin was only too well acquainted. The sovereign state was intended to be simple. It remains, in a real sense, simple. But it may also seem inadequate, entirely of itself, as a provider of a high level of welfare and of a high level of international security for its citizens. The difficulty for the statesman must lie in the degree to which he should

qualify or undermine the sovereign state, which, in its own terms, has served men well, and to which the bulk of men remain fastly committed, for ends which are, of necessity, problematical. That the state should limit itself, both in response to what is good and to what is necessary, is often an acceptable proposition to liberal ears. But self-limitation is an exercise of sovereignty, not its abnegation, and what is good and what is necessary do not always coincide.

An acceptance of the implications of the idea of the plurality of legal systems places the statesman in a position of almost impossible complication and difficulty, though it could be argued that this is what statesmanship is about. The denial of the plurality of legal systems can present the statesman with a view of the world of perhaps brutal simplicity. To the school which finds much of its inspiration in Machiavelli and Hobbes, the statesman's difficulties, for all their immensity, are not primarily moral. If the statesman serves the security and interests of the state he acts morally. The interests of the sovereign are the moral imperatives of the statesman. This view is realist in the sense that it recognizes and emphasizes the anarchical structure of the relations between states. In this dangerous situation the state must acquire strength with which to bribe and frighten, the statesman must develop the cunning to exploit the errors of other statesmen, and the only purpose worth pursuing is the interest of the state, for this is all that endures. Yet even this view can have a strongly idealist side. The state is a feature of an internal legal and moral order. It is the main organizing factor of an actual legal and moral entity, and if it allows itself to be destroyed or harmed, then it is likely that the associated legal order may be destroyed. In this sense, then, the ordered society, which is the only society within which men may lead moral lives, is dependent upon the state. If statesmen sacrifice the state, because of squeamishness or because they have neglected its defences, they commit an immoral act. If the state falls because statesmen have placed some private morality above its demands, then the moral life is not thereby served, for the collapse of the state leads to the collapse of the moral order which depends upon it. If, in this kind of way, the moral life is taken to depend substantially upon the existence of the state, it seems to follow that necessity of state is a principle taking absolute priority over other moral principles with which it may be in conflict.

This kind of doctrine has often been attractive to Europeans intimately familiar, over long periods, with the horrors of international war, and, particularly in the German case, acutely aware of

their disunity and weakness. In the mind of Hegel this broad kind of outlook became a grand metaphysical system. Indeed, under such influences the principle of necessity of state could, and did, become an imperative knowing no bounds at all. So strong could this attitude become that the social order associated with the state could be thought of as entirely adjustable to the demands of the state in its international setting. Thus, this supposed anarchical setting could demand a disciplined social order to protect the state. This kind of reasoning was potentially and actually demoniacal. Men acted for the state; but men motivated by such apparently compelling propositions were apt to ignore the injunction of Machiavelli that the prince must be prepared to sacrifice himself, and, more importantly, his pride, for the state. The carnage of the Great War, to which the doctrine of unrestrained necessity of state may have contributed, led realists to search about for some means of preventing the excesses to which the principle of necessity of state seem fatally prone. For some, the sober calculation of interests is conducive to humility. For others, a belief in God is felt likely to implant in the minds of statesmen the knowledge that the total idealization of the state is idolatrous; and where statesmanship requires apparently immoral activity then this will be attended by an acute sense of guilt which will act as a powerful restraint upon any tendency to excess. And for others, the social order must control the state, so that the statesman who contemplates the traditional modes and values of his society will act moderately within this context in his efforts to secure the state for posterity. Difficulties clearly attach to these solutions to extreme extensions of necessity of state. Men may radically miscalculate the interests and capabilities of the state. They may not believe in God. And the traditions of their society may not themselves be free from excess.

For all that the notion of the state has suffered at the hands of political scientists, it is still a common view that in the international arena 'the state is the basic, irreducible unit, equivalent to the individual person in society' (Nettl, 1968, 563). It would be difficult to fault the empirical observation that most men regard the state as the unit of international affairs, that most men appear to desire a state to act for them in the international arena, that the mobilization of resources to international purposes is largely arranged in terms of states, that international obligations are assumed by states and met, when they are met, by states. But having said all that it is still extraordinary how little one has in fact said. To suggest that statesmen act largely in terms of states does not very adequately explain how they

act, their motives, or the nature of the debates turning on many of their actions. Nor does an addiction to the notion of the state necessarily produce clear recommendations which may be pressed upon statesmen. And how can it not be contradictory that the state should be devalued in the eyes of political scientists investigating the processes of the political system, but revalued in the eyes of political scientists attempting to develop an understanding of the international arena, particularly when the same pairs of eyes are involved in both pursuits?

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7

Systems

The efforts of political scientists to get away from predominantly legalistic and philosophical concerns in recent decades has had the effect of setting the notion of the political system in the central place once occupied by the notion of the state. The political system therefore becomes the basic unit of foreign policy. In essence, the notion of political system attempts to distinguish, in a completely general way, the nature of political activity in a societal context, to organize the characteristics of this form of activity in an analytically coherent way, to build into its characteristics general properties which encompass both formal and informal political processes and structures, and to set this coherent system of political activity in an environment with which it interacts through exchange flows of various kinds. Many variant models of this conception of political system have been produced in recent years. This essay will concentrate initially on an input-output model largely, though not exclusively, derived from the works of Almond and Easton, in the conviction that such a model will exhibit the essential characteristics, positive and negative, of this style of political thinking in relation to foreign policy. However, theorists in this field usually construct their models with the problems of explaining domestic politics primarily in mind; foreign policy and international relations are then, as it were, added to the resultant models to make them comprehensive. So, finally, this chapter will consider a most unusual example of the reverse case. This is provided by Modelski, who has attempted a completely generalized explanation of foreign policy in terms of a model of political system specifically designed for this purpose.

In the broadest terms, a system may be conceived to exist in a concentration of flows. Inputs flow into it and outputs flow out of it. Functions, performed by structures, convert inputs into outputs. Fundamental to the idea of system is the idea of interdependence. The components of the system are highly related and if the properties of one component are changed then the other components of the system are affected. These twin concepts of flows and interdependence must logically carry in train some idea of equilibrium. Amid the flows with which it is involved, and of which it is largely composed, the system maintains its character through time. In this way equilibrium is to be equated with the existence of the system over at least a limited period. This notion of equilibrium must in turn involve the idea of regulatory mechanisms of some kind; that is, when something happens to upset the system, mechanisms go to work to absorb disturbing effects. It follows that while some functions and some inputs may have the effect of maintaining the system's equilibrium, some inputs and some functions may, at times, have the effect of upsetting the system's equilibrium. What maintains equilibrium is sometimes called eufunctional, but more commonly simply functional; what tends to upset equilibrium is dysfunctional. Systems operate at three conceptually distinct levels. First, the system must maintain its fabric in existence. This is the level of system-maintenance. Second, the system must respond to the inputs coming into it. This is the level of conversion: inputs are converted into outputs. Third, the system has relations with its environment. This level is sometimes referred to as that of the system's capabilities.

This concept of system is of the utmost generality. The next step must be to give it political substance. The first task of systems analysis is to set a boundary to one's concept of system, to indicate the category of events to which one wishes to apply the notion of system. In the present context, one must define what the political system is about, what it is that distinguishes it from other systems. Almond's first-step identification is set out thus: 'Legitimate force is the thread that runs through the inputs and outputs of the political system, giving it its special quality and salience and its coherence as a system' (Almond and Coleman, 1960, 7). This identification, closely related to traditional notions of the state, distinguishes politics as being concerned with the process of making allocations which have the peculiar characteristic that behind them lies a threat of the use of force, and this threat of force is considered right and acceptable to the broad mass of the people concerned. Easton avoids direct

reference to force when he defines political relations as being concerned with 'the authoritative allocation of values for a society' (Easton, 1965a, 50). This second kind of definition evades questions to do with the nature of authority. The system's allocations may be acceptable through fear, lack of alternatives, positive enthusiasm, or any of a large variety of motivations. This open-ended characteristic enables the Eastonian system to be extended to cover global political relations. This extension will be taken up in a later chapter; to avoid confusion in the present setting, the first kind of identification is preferable. So all the inputs entering the political system and all the outputs coming out of the political system are related to the exercise of authority, and authority, for the present, is ultimately related to the use of legitimate physical compulsion.

Beyond this boundary lies the system's environment, which can be further distinguished as partly intra-societal and partly extra-societal. The intra-societal environment lies within the society of which the political system forms a part. The extra-societal environment extends beyond the territory of the society as a whole and includes both international social systems and international political systems. The flow of effects from its various environments is resolved into two kinds of inputs into the political system. The first is support inputs, which may take the form of active participation in the political system, payment of taxes, service in the instruments of the political system. Given that in any system political cleavages exist and that these are a threat to the system's existence, it follows that the system must have mechanisms to reduce the effects of such cleavage. Three mechanisms operating on support can be distinguished: first, the mechanism of direct action on social structure (e.g., the deliberate reduction of class or racial barriers, the purposeful cultivation of a sense of co-operation); second, the mechanism of building up specific support for the regime and the community through the outputs of the system (the assumption being that the satisfaction of wants stimulates support for the structures satisfying those wants); third, the mechanism whereby diffuse support is built up against times of stress—the mechanism whereby the system accumulates 'a reservoir of support upon which (it) may draw credit in time when things are going badly from the point of view of providing satisfactions for the members of the system' (Easton, 1965b, 249). In the Eastonian scheme supporting attitudes and actions attach to three objects: to the political community or the sense of common political involvement; to the regime, the more-or-less formal arrangements whereby political

decisions are made; and to the authorities, that is, actual role-players in authoritative positions. The second category of inputs into the political system is demands. A demand may be thought of as the expression of the view that the authorities in the political system should make (or refrain from making) an authoritative decision about a particular matter. In broad terms one might distinguish four sorts of demands: first, demands for allocations of goods and services; second, demands for general regulations; third, demands for participation in the political process; and, fourth, demands for symbolic satisfactions, flags, parades, anthems and suchlike.

It has been established that the political system converts inputs into outputs. At this conversion level the system reduces and combines inputs by means of structures and processes which in some cases block inputs, in other cases resolve them into issues, in others pass them straight through to authorities. Conversion functions like these are sometimes typified as those of articulation and aggregation. In this kind of way, inputs are selectively converted into authoritative rules and allocations. All the while, information about all these activities must be transmitted throughout the system, and between the system and at least some segments of its environment.

Following Easton (1965b, 345) we may say that inputs 'summarize or mediate the disturbances and changes taking place in the environment' of the political system. Outputs are the stream of activities flowing out from the authorities in the system. In Eastonian terms, 'outputs serve to conceptualize the ways in which the system acts back upon the environment and, indirectly, therefore upon itself, by modifying, at times, succeeding inputs of support and demands.' Outputs in this sense are not terminal points of the system but part of a continuous chain of activities which Easton identifies as a feedback loop. Outputs are the 'mechanism through which the authorities in a system reach out to cope with problems created by external changes as they are reflected through changing demand and support' (Easton, 1965b, 346). In this function authorities are not passive intermediaries between inputs and outputs. They work constructively on issues and demands; they intervene in events; they combine, reject, amend and assimilate the flow of effects into the system. Outputs, then, are the outgoing transactions of the political system with its environment; and they are sometimes characterized as being either extractive, regulative, allocative or symbolic. They begin a feedback loop with many possible effects on succeeding inputs.

The model of political system taken only as far as this is a some-

what static conception. Inputs, conversion functions, outputs, feedback—the dynamics of this system are those of a merry-go-round, full of movement but essentially unchanging and stationary. Easton (1965b, *passim*) accounts for change, adaptation, and redirection of goals in terms of response to stress. From time to time the system is subject to stress (cleavages appear in support, demands become excessively contradictory, feedback responses are delayed or side-tracked) and in its responses, or attempted responses, the system may undergo change of a fundamental kind. Almond (1965, *passim*) emphasizes a similar notion in his treatment of dysfunctional effects as essential to change and development in his system. It has been indicated above that the political system may be conceived to operate at three conceptually distinct levels, the level of its capabilities, or relations with its environment, the level of its conversion functions, and the level of system-maintenance. The activities of the system at all these levels are highly related. The system could not, for example, make welfare distributions if it did not have the extractive and regulative capabilities to gather and organize funds for these purposes. Similarly, the capability of the system for drawing funds from its domestic environment is related to its capability for drawing funds from its international environment. Again, the capability of the system for making regulations is related to the inclinations of the populace to support the system and obey its regulations. The capability of the system to produce effective symbols depends on the emotional impact of such devices upon the populace. A great deal depends on the internal structure of the system; it cannot make complicated regulations without a bureaucracy, a police force, a high inclination to obedience. It cannot respond quickly and effectively to stern external challenges without military forces and fairly strong support from the people. And so on. The conceptual categories of the model are highly related.

Almond sets out (1965, *passim*) a general scheme for the analysis of dysfunctionality as it hits the political system. He specifies five dimensions of dysfunctional demand inputs. First, there is the quantitative dimension. Dysfunctional demand inputs may be incremental; they may, for example, take the form of gradually increasing pressure for participation in the political process which can be met without fundamental structural upheaval. On the other hand, the quantitative dimension encompasses high magnitude demands which cannot be met without basic cultural and structural adaptation; given the importance of environment, such were the nature of demands for participation among peoples of colonial territories as they moved

into the post-Atlantic Charter world. In this sort of way, each dimension presents a scale of dysfunctionality. The second dimension identified by Almond is that of content: dysfunctionality varies according to subject-matter and environment. A demand for land reform in the highlands of Scotland is far less dysfunctional than a demand for land reform in a crowded agricultural country of the Far East. The third dimension is intensity: demands can vary from mild mutterings at political gatherings to vigorous rioting in the streets of the capital. The fourth dimension is that of sheer numbers: the greater the number of articulated demands, the greater, probably, the stress on the structure of the system. And, fifthly, demands vary according to source: some will emanate from the extra-societal environment, some from the intra-societal environment, and some will be generated by the system itself. In most cases it will be much harder for the system to act on dysfunctional structures in the extra-societal environment than on such structures in the intra-societal environment. Support inputs can also show dysfunctionality, which may vary in intensity. Dysfunctional support inputs may occur in a host of ways, from extreme evasion of taxes to refusal to fight for the authorities.

Outputs, as well, can have dysfunctional effects, particularly through feedback. Almond provides an example. An output shift from an aggressive foreign policy to an accommodative foreign policy will release resources which may, for example, be added to the welfare capability of the system by the authorities. The use of the increased welfare capability may alter demand and support inputs and these shifts may affect conversion and system-maintenance functions, which, in turn, may alter the capability profile of the system and its foreign policy options. The load of dysfunctional effects the political system must bear is closely related to the capability profiles of associated intra-societal and extra-societal systems. For example, if a major religious system suffers a decline in capability for regulating the conduct of its members, large numbers of innovative demand inputs may be released into the political system; additionally, a greater strain will probably be placed on the regulative capability of the political system. Similarly, if the international system's distributive capability increases, if foreign aid is in more abundant supply, then this will reduce stresses on the intra-societal extractive capability of the political system, and this will probably increase the intensity of its support input.

Almond distinguishes three modes of authoritative reaction to

dysfunctional inputs. First, there is the adaptive response. This categorizes acceptance of demands along with concomitant changes in political outlook and political structures. Second, there is the rejective reaction. Depending on the system's capabilities, rejection may vary from indifference to outright physical repression. Third, there is the substitutive response; an example of this reaction would be provided by the not uncommon situation where dysfunctional demands for welfare measures are absorbed by assertions of national unity, coupled, perhaps, with an aggressive foreign policy. Finally, Almond considers the relation of socialization and recruitment functions (the level of system-maintenance) to political change. These functions are commonly affected by changes in intra-societal and extra-societal systems. Industrialization and urbanization, for example, will mobilize large sections of the population into new productive roles, involving fresh political orientations, which in turn may express themselves in dysfunctional demands of many kinds. Patterns of socialization and recruitment are commonly acted upon by authorities. In a totalitarian system, for example, the ruling party will probably attempt to act through all social structures to control the socialization process. This comprehensive manipulation will affect the occurrence of dysfunctional inputs and thereby control the rate of change in the system. Almond also emphasizes the impact of an aggressive foreign policy upon recruitment and socialization. Such a policy will involve mobilization of support, which may be very forthcoming if the policy is successful. If, on the other hand, the policy is unsuccessful, if, for example, military defeat occurs, a highly dysfunctional withdrawal of support may take place.

The general notion of political system delineated above is open to a number of criticisms. But its merits are of an order sufficient to ensure its survival in some form. It aims to get away from the concept of the state and it succeeds in doing so. The political system, for all the attention its adherents give to the definition of boundaries, is clearly no billiard ball. The central notion of flows and systemic exchanges ensures that the idea of political system will be closely associated with response and change within a shifting field of global relations. It aims to get away from exclusive concern with formal institutions and in this it is also successful: the generalized functions of the political system can be analytically associated with virtually any arrangement of formal and informal political and social institutions and activities. It aims to be clear, general and comprehensive; and it scores well in each of these endeavours. It is concerned with

placing political modes of activity in the context of social activity at large, while at the same time maintaining a direct and mature analytical approach to politics. Here again it does not fail, though one may question the degree of its success.

In relation to foreign policy analysis, this concept of political system as the central unit of attention has three substantial merits. First is the relative ease with which it connects problems of foreign policy with problems of internal policy, and problems of policy of all kinds with problems of structure, both social and political. It is a common characteristic of foreign policy analysts that they suggest the supreme importance of the relations between domestic politics and foreign policy; however, it is rarely the case that coherent analytic suggestions are offered to tackle this problem. The concepts associated with dysfunctionality, capabilities, systemic exchanges, feedback, and structural stress are well suited to the analytical incorporation of the outputs and inputs of international systems with those of national systems, as has been demonstrated. At the same time, this style of analysis does not imply actual policy coherence in all these areas; the notion of dysfunction in fact implies the opposite. Second, this kind of analytical scheme has no intrinsic difficulty with the idea that the outgoings of the political system may be closely related to underlying systemic changes at the extra-societal level in categories other than the political, as defined by the terms of the model. It has no difficulty, for example, in analysing the collapse of international religious systems in terms of dysfunctional effects upon the political system, which in turn will stimulate compensating changes in structures and outputs. Third, this kind of scheme is genuinely unparochial. If it is considered desirable that the analyst should have at his disposal a set of categories which will help him to get to grips with many diverse actual situations, the kind of analytic endeavour outlined here must be judged creative. It does not lean too heavily on any actual political system. And though an ideological component can be fitted into the political system, the notion itself is not strongly ideological.

There are a number of familiar grounds for criticizing the idea of political system as used here. One may question the premise of interdependence or seamlessness. Many, very many, political events would seem to be isolated in a way which places them outside the notion of political system. In what necessary sense, for example, is a cabinet shuffle involving a change in the office of Foreign Secretary in the United Kingdom evidence of interdependence? And how could

the understandings reached between France and Britain before the First World War be thought of as part of the seamless texture of the political system of the United Kingdom when so many members of the government seem to have been unaware of their existence? A second line of criticism focuses on the notion of boundaries, which is virtually essential to any concept of system. In what sense is a system's boundary empirical? When, actually, does social upheaval become political? When does an output leave the political system? Internal discussions on, for example, the disposition and size of military forces may have a considerable effect on the attitudes and actions of other powers. But such discussions may be entirely unresolved and far from authoritative decision. Are they, or are they not, outputs? Issues may, in this way, be themselves kinds of outputs. A third familiar criticism takes up the notion of equilibrium. The system maintains itself over time; dysfunctional inputs are regulated; adjustments absorb stress. It can be held, particularly when it is accepted that the basic notion of system has been invalidated, that this amounts to a monstrous addiction to a conservative ethic. Making the system survive is the appropriate form of political activity. The central place of equilibrium would seem to exclude the possibility that other standards may exist of greater moral priority. It seems thus virtually identical with the doctrine of state necessity. And because equilibrium does not specify what kind of system should be preserved, this sort of systems outlook can be seen as nothing more than the conceptual servant of existing authority in whatever form it may exist. Fourth, it can be readily held that the systems outlook is nothing more than a tautological arrangement of completely abstract notions which can tell us nothing about the external world and the political arguments taking place in it, and which is productive of nothing more than a particularly hideous jargon. Flows of abstract effects, empirically indiscernible boundaries, systemic exchanges between imagined entities, and so on—these notions are so broad that empirical events may be fitted into them in any way the addict pleases. If there are no necessary connections between concepts and actualities, a theoretical framework is either a trivially amusing form of empty scholasticism, or possibly a dangerous fantasy in those cases where it gives its adherents a false sense of authority in their statements and convictions about events and movements.

Two lines suggested by these general criticisms must be developed in the context of foreign policy studies. It may be fairly easy to concede to the notion of political system, in formulations similar

to that presented here, the utmost degree of generality. Yet generality of this order may reasonably be held to be altogether excessive, since it seems inclined to extinguish international relations where these are taken to be made up of the interaction of dissimilar foreign policies in a world made up of dissimilar and unequal states. The model is without the essential variability of policy, without the essential sense of direction policy attempts to achieve, without essentially differing attitudes to the external world. The central need is for an understanding of variety of policy and structure if foreign policy is to be approached through the concept of political system. Easton appears to go some way towards meeting this kind of difficulty when he says that '. . . the authorities or those politically relevant members under whose inspiration they are acting, are able to intervene positively in the course of events' (Easton, 1965b, 346). This kind of qualification would seem to suggest that the political system is more than a self-maintaining automaton. It (or bits of it) can take a positive, even creative, attitude to policy. The difficulty here is that the notion of political system adds nothing to one's understanding of this kind of creativity nor does it contribute to a discussion of the kind of policy alternatives likely to be relevant to it. In contrast to Easton, Almond and Powell introduce a major explanatory category to cover what they refer to as the 'underlying propensities' of the political system, or its 'psychological dimension'. This is the political culture, which 'consists of attitudes, beliefs, values, and skills which are current in an entire population, as well as those special propensities and patterns which may be found within separate parts of that population' (Almond and Powell, 1966, 23). Here again we are presented with a set of considerations of the highest significance to the formation of policy, which at the same time evade the central fact of the variability of these considerations and their sometimes problematic nature. 'Patterns' and 'propensities' must be taken to refer to discontinuities in values (every society has its extreme radicals and its extreme conservatives) and to disagreement about the nature of the political system and its objectives, whether these be intra-societal or extra-societal. Indeed it is difficult to think of an actual system without discontinuities and disagreements in these areas. The multiplicity of items and issues which can be included under political culture would appear to be so extensive, and full of so many possibilities of debate, that the apparent neatness of the notion of political system is shown to be chimerical. If foreign policy is taken to refer, in part at least, to the international directedness

of societies it would seem that the idea of political system is largely sterile except in the categories of the political culture and the creativity of authorities. But these categories are so broad, and so full of difficulties, and so unlike the other categories of the systemic mode of thinking that they can hardly be held to contribute much to the understanding of the vital matters drawn within their scope.

Second, there are the difficulties associated with the way in which systemic approaches similar to that suggested here avoid direct confrontation with the idea of power and all the problems associated with it. The concept of political system is centred on the notion of authoritative allocations. So, in a sense, power and the political system are conterminous, and no separate discussion of power is called for in domestic terms. The idea of capabilities (see particularly Almond and Powell, 1966, 190-212) conceptualizes what political systems do in their environments. Relations between inputs from other political systems and the outputs of a given political system into the international arena may be seen as the international responsive capability of that political system. Almond and Powell offer this example (1966, 204-5):

> Examination of the flow of action from the British system into the international environment and from the international environment into the British system will enable us to characterise its international capability according to a variety of dimensions. Thus, an accommodative international capability would be one in which demands made on other political systems are in some proportion to compliance with demands which other political systems make upon it. The study of the different patterns of interaction among political systems according to these categories of capabilities should enable us to be much more discriminating than has been the case in the past in characterising and distinguishing between foreign policies of different political systems.

Almond and Powell suggest a number of factors affecting capability pattern: elite responses, material resources, organizational capacity of the system, and levels of support entering the system. They neglect to mention the capabilities of other powers. It will be readily appreciated that if one takes the view that the essence of relations between states is to do with the acquisition and application of power, then the Almond and Powell categories are empty of serious explanatory content. Delineating a responsive capability does not explain the nature of responsiveness in the international arena. Does Britain

accommodate because other states have power over her? Suggesting a number of internal factors affecting capabilities does not explain how or why power is acquired, the purposes to which it is put, and the nature of international limitations placed upon it. Nor does this kind of analysis throw much light on the kind of power which the international system yields, or can be contrived to yield, to a state because of the situation that state occupies. Nor does it explain international hates and obsessions, though it may have categories into which they may be put.

Modelski meets some of these problems in an adaptation of the input-output configuration of concepts specifically intended to provide theoretical backing to the study of foreign policy. In the Modelski formulation the task of the policy-maker is that of formulating the interests of the state, procuring power-inputs, defining the state's objectives in given situations, and allocating power-output among these objectives. And, in Modelski's view, the policy-maker has a definite obligation to see to it that the community allocates power-inputs to foreign policy sufficient to further formulated interests. Power is defined as 'the community's present means to obtain the future desirable behaviour of other states' (Modelski, 1962, 21). The 'foreign-policy machine' (39) receives power-inputs; these it transforms into power-outputs which are expended for the protection of the community. Power-input is conceived to come from both within the state and from other states, and is thus internal and external. Power-inputs are not entirely current. They may be the yield of past actions, which are called power-resources. They may also be the yield of proposed future actions. These are the present benefits of promises. Internal power-input has a human aspect, including such items as organization; and a non-human aspect, including such items as industrial equipment and armaments reserves. Prominent among the components of external power-input are the actions of other states which are performed for services received. Support of this kind takes numerous forms, from diplomatic encouragement to the supply of military materials and bases. Additional external power-inputs may be the receipts for past efforts; these are the return on external power-resources and may attach to past guarantees, services, loans. Thirdly, external power-inputs may be the result of promises and power-liabilities undertaken by the receiving state. On the side of output, Modelski asserts that 'there can be no state action in the international field that does not, in one form or another, constitute a drain on power' (40). It follows that 'all foreign policy requires power-input,

which is to say that power must be provided if foreign policy is to be followed at all; every foreign-policy operation (output) involves the use, or misuse, of that power' (40).

The components of power-output are analysed at two levels: first, by reference to their benefits; second, by conceiving of them as the costs of different foreign policy operations. Power-output takes the form of operation and investment. Power-investment has two aspects: the maintenance of existing power-resources (items such as armies, installations, alliances and so on); and the creation of new power resources (formation of alliances, acquisition of military strength and so on). Power-investment is conceived to improve the efficiency of operations, and to make new operations possible. The cost of a foreign policy operation is the proportion of power-output allocated to it. And for Modelski 'all power consists of capacity for organised action in the service of foreign policy' (59). As Modelski indicates, there is no satisfactory measure of power, so the analyst has to make do with partial indices, such as wealth and military strength. Power costs are distributed among a variety of uses and are incurred by a number of agents such as government departments and military commanders. Costs must be deemed to attach to particular objectives. So all the costs attaching to one objective must be grouped together to determine the power-output involved in the pursuit of that objective. In this way, costs and gains may be assessed and contrasted as between objectives.

In the view of Modelski (65–99), policy-makers are the targets of interests and the formulators of foreign policy objectives. Interests are the demands and desires referring to the activities of other states which are brought to bear on policy-makers. Those whose demands have a claim on the attention of policy-makers constitute the policy-makers' community. The community is one of the structural features of foreign policy. It is not restricted to the members of one state (indeed, many such may be ignored or have no view) and may include members (statesmen and others) of the external environment having claims on policy-makers. Intrinsic to this notion of community is the notion of outside groups and communities. There will be indifferent groups and enemy groups. Enemies are 'the consequence of past failure to implement wishes or demands presented to policy-makers; alternatively, enemies are the result of jeopardizing certain interests in order to satisfy other demands' (68). It is impossible for a foreign policy to satisfy all interests, so no policy-maker can avoid having enemies. In addition to this consequence of policy, the policy-maker may be led

to ignore certain interests because by doing so he simplifies policy-making. In the area of power, policy-makers are concerned with the transformation of power-input into power-output. In the area of aims, they are concerned with the translation of interests into objectives of foreign policy. In this latter capacity they are the recipients of the claims of their community, but, in the nature of the case, they cannot translate such claims exactly into foreign policy operations, though, in Modelski's view, policy-makers should never forget that a 'certain minimum of interests belonging to all members of the community must at all costs be safeguarded' (86).

Objectives of foreign policy define the changes in the foreign policies of other states which are the desired result of foreign policy operations. They are the tasks of foreign policy. To formulate the desirable policies of other states and to define the tasks of policy-implementing organizations is the chief concern of policy-makers. Without an objective in this sense a foreign policy operation is a waste of power. Policy changes must always be discussed in relation to changes in objectives. 'If policy-makers pursue objectives that reflect the interests of a large number of groups and states, their community will flourish and expand. If they pursue objectives that offend many groups and states, or even harm their interests, the community will decline and contract' (91).

The choice of foreign policy objectives to produce changes that appear desirable in other foreign policies is a formidable task. Policy-makers have basically four methods to select from: they may influence other states by 'influencing their interests, their power-input, their objectives, or their power-output' (93). Political and moral principles both enforce and complicate the aims of foreign policy. Principles are, in Modelski's view, simple, strong and general. They are functional in the sense that they are firm, while their generality may form a bridge both between the aims of one state, and between the aims of several states, in the latter case forming the foundation, for example, of international law. But their qualities may also be dysfunctional. Simplicity may ignore actual complexity. Tenacity often becomes rigidity. And generality may, in doctrinaire versions, have the effect of harming community self-interest.

The notions of equilibrium and interdependence are vital to the dynamics of the Modelski system. A change in foreign policy is the product of changes among its four determinants or among the foreign policies of other states. Since the foreign policies of other states are also determined by their four elements, it follows that a given foreign

policy is changed by changes in its own four elements or in the elements of the foreign policies of other states. Modelski holds (102–3) that interaction between a plurality of actors proceeds inertly, or smoothly, until a disturbance is introduced into the system. So again change is to be explained in terms of disturbance to systemic equilibrium. A change in an element of foreign policy may be internally induced, that is by variation among the other elements (say, a change in interests causing a change in objectives); or it can be externally induced by a variation in the foreign policy of another state (say, a change in power-input as a result of foreign military assistance). Modelski distinguishes internal interdependence, that of the elements of foreign policy, from external interdependence, that of all foreign policies. 'A foreign policy may be said to be in equilibrium if all of its elements are adjusted to each other (internally), and to the foreign policies of other states (externally)' (106).

Processes of adaptation to change among the elements of foreign policy are called positive adjustment; processes tending to restore previous equilibrium are called negative adjustment. Given that the internal foreign policy system has only four elements, only six modes of relationship are possible among them: interests, power-input; interests, objectives; interests, power-output; power input, power-output; power-input, objectives; objectives, power-output. Modelski analyses internal adjustment in terms of each of these relations in turn. For example, interests unsupported by power-input remain idle dreams; and power-input unrelated to interests is held to be wasted. And this is why a change in interests, say the adoption of a new demand, is likely to yield corresponding changes in power-input in the shape, for example, of increased contributions from those upholding that demand. In the same way, the abandonment of an interest by policy-makers reduces the power-input supplied to them by those supporting it.

In the analysis of external adjustment (i.e., adjustment between foreign policies) Modelski distinguishes offensive and defensive reactions, which are equated with positive and negative reactions in internal adjustment. Offensive foreign policy attempts to induce a change in the foreign policy of another state; defensive policy attempts to maintain the *status quo*. External equilibrium has been reached 'when the offensive actions of a state have been met by the defensive reactions of other states and when the offensive actions of other states have been successfully countered by the ego-state's own defensive reactions' (129). Modelski distinguishes four groups of external adjust-

ment processes. The first is changing the interests of other states. This may be affected, for example, by changing the demands of the internal community of another state (acting on another people directly) or by changing the desires of the external community (by getting a third party or ally to intervene). Or the interests of policy-makers may be changed by direct negotiation or pressure. Or another state's policy-makers themselves may be changed by one means or another. Various defensive reactions exist to prevent changes of interests. For example, policy-makers may strengthen their positions in their community, their community may be cut off from external influence, intrusions from third parties may be resisted by many means, and so on. The second group of external adjustment problems relate to inducing, and resisting, changes in the power-input of other states. This may take place in the context of warfare, blockade, or a large range of harmful activities of that kind. The third group of external adjustments centre on the changing of the objectives of another state. A state may do this by changing the objectives of its own foreign policy, by abandoning or adopting friendly or unfriendly objectives. The fourth set of adjustment processes concerns the influence that can be brought to bear on the power-output of another state. One state, for example, is able to influence the power-output of another state by changes in its own power-output; and the other state may act similarly to negate such an adjustment. Action and reaction of this kind might take the form of an arms race.

This essay has dwelt at some length on the Modelski model because this is one of very few attempts to deal specifically with foreign policy in the systems framework, because it seldom receives the attention it so obviously merits, and because, by its very boldness, it throws into unusually stark outlines the advantages and disadvantages of looking at politics and foreign policy in this kind of way. The Modelski model is undoubtedly general. It certainly incorporates the idea of power into its approach to the relations between states. While not extinguishing the notion of the distinctive nature of foreign policy, it analyses it coherently both from internal and external viewpoints. Though it finds some place for the state, the mechanisms policy-makers control, it does not equate foreign policy with activities of state. In its conception of the community of policy-makers it encompasses the possibility of policy-makers being influenced, perhaps equally, by both internal and external forces. While committed to the systems apparatus, Modelski manages to find a place for human purpose in the category of objectives of foreign policy. Additionally, in contrast to

many systems analysts, Modelski does not baulk at the practical and prescriptive aspects of his approach: he is concerned with the 'tasks of policy-makers' and his approach can be viewed as an aid in these tasks, not least in that it insists on the policy task of comparing alternative uses and costs of power-outputs.

This is not to suggest that the Modelski model is entirely acceptable. It may be that his efforts to manage the peculiarities of foreign policy leave him most open to criticism. His use of power, for example, must be highly questionable. As quoted above, Modelski equates all foreign policy operations with the use, or consumption, of power. Power is therefore the only means of foreign policy. And changing, or acting to preserve, the foreign policies of other states is the only end of foreign policy. Every act of foreign policy therefore requires a power-input and a power-output. The apparent simplicity of this arrangement does not conceal the fact that Modelski has effectively deprived the notion of power of any distinctive meaning. Operations of foreign policy are power. The two terms are completely interchangeable. So why have two terms? One such term cannot contribute to the explanation of the other if they are both, by definition, the same. Modelski retrieves the position somewhat by distinguishing different kinds of power-input and different kinds of foreign policy operations, in the sense, for example, that foreign policy may act on the objectives and power-inputs of other foreign policies and may use power-resources for these purposes. These are not meaningless categories; but their explanatory potential is much reduced by the assumption that all acts of foreign policy are power. If foreign policy is power, power, however finely categorized, cannot explain foreign policy.

The only operational dimension other than power that Modelski admits to foreign policy is that of objectives. Policy-makers receive, or are bombarded by, interests and they formulate objectives, which they pursue with power. If objectives, or aims, are to have the explanatory impact of dependent variables, or even independent variables, much more attention must be given them than Modelski gives. It is unclear what relation aims bear to power-output. Are they always present or only sometimes present? Are they dependent upon, partially dependent upon, or independent of interests? What sort of things are objectives? How are they classified? The vagueness of objectives in conjunction with the utter generality of power can never comprise a theory of foreign policy, which is Modelski's declared aim. Nor can any firm anchor be found in the conception of community. Modelski postulates the existence of policy-makers and defines community as

those whose interests policy-makers serve. In other words, community is not defined by Modelski, it is defined by policy-makers. And, presumably, community will differ as foreign policies differ: at one moment, and for one purpose, a policy-maker may select one community and, at another moment, for another purpose, he may select a different community. Here again, we are landed with a tautology. If the objectives of foreign policy define the community of foreign policy, then community cannot explain objectives. One wants to know: why this community and why this objective? Modelski's model cannot provide an answer, unless it lies in his conception of policy-makers. If policy-makers are the essential ingredient—the blending, selecting, striving ingredient—then many of our questions fall into place by reference to the creative role of policy-makers. But if the model depends for its validity on the creativity of policy-makers it cannot contribute to that creativity, except, perhaps in that it may clarify policy-makers' field of activity, should they become aquainted with it. It may clarify their position but it gives them very little advice as to what they should do in it, with one substantial, and highly questionable, exception.

Equilibrium occupies a central place in the Modelski scheme. His system is inert until disturbance occurs by means of change in foreign policy, which merely mediates change among the determinants of foreign policy. In response to this stimulous, positive and negative adaptive mechanisms come into play. And, as cited above, external equilibrium is reached when offensive actions and reactions are in balance with defensive actions and reactions.

What can this kind of formulation be interpreted to mean from a prescriptive viewpoint? It must incline, as indicated earlier, to support a severely conservative approach to politics. Action is, and should be, met by reaction. But looking a little deeper, it is possible to detect a form of intellectual helplessness within the notion of equilibrium. The idea that offensive and defensive forces are at work, and that the system as a whole moves towards equilibrium, can do no other than foster a determinist view of history. The way it works out is the way it works out. The whole system moves towards equilibrium by any means available. This is prescriptively almost empty of prescription. The main reason why equilibrium can have these confusing policy implications is that in social terms nobody can be sure as to what it is. Has foreign policy equilibrium ever existed? The implications of Modelski's dynamic analysis is that it never has. The standard of

analysis is, in this light, an imagined condition that has never materialized, and can never materialize, one might reasonably suppose. It is therefore a kind of promised land, about whose nature no one can agree except in terms so abstract as to have no specific practical implications. Agreement about equilibrium, and agreement that it is a tool of prescriptive value, depends on quantification (see Easton, 1956). The reason why the notion of the balance of payments, for example, is prescriptively useful, is that it is possible to quantify it, to know what it is, and to agree that at moments it has been in a condition of fairly stable balance. These characteristics do not apply to notions of equilibrium in the international system conceived to be made up of the foreign policies of constituent political systems. The important items of Modelski's model (power, objectives, community) are essentially unquantifiable. It might be possible to contrive an index of some of these items, but this would not take the form of quantification and it is highly unlikely that it would be agreed. The notion of equilibrium is virtually as old as the notion of social science. It is immensely difficult to get away from. For this reason, if no other, it must be treated with the greatest suspicion, qualified and restricted as much as possible. If equilibrium becomes metaphysical, and it almost becomes so in the Modelski system, then social science becomes a little farcical. One way of restricting equilibrium is to restrict one's notion of system: the more limited one's system the more specific, and valuable, the notion of equilibrium, as we shall see in a later section. Where the system is all-inclusive, and Modelski would seem to fall into this trap, the notion of equilibrium also becomes all-inclusive. And this, one might reasonably hold, makes it meaningless in practical terms.

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8

Issues and elites

In a celebrated passage, first published more than seventy years ago, Gaetano Mosca wrote:

> Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies—from societies that are very meagrely developed and have barely attained the dawnings of civilisation, down to the most advanced and powerful societies—two classes of people appear—a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism (Mosca, 1939 edition, 50).

This is not an appropriate place to trace the origins and often rancorous development of the idea of elite rule. The present concern is to consider the possibility of finding a unit of foreign policy at once more conceptually political than the notion of the state and less conceptually tautological than the notion of political system. Turning to the idea of the elite is not an act of desperation, for, as we have seen, both state and political system offer much to illuminate

the nature of foreign policy; nor is it an act of simple-minded hope that in the idea of the elite will be found a unit both precise and uncontentious, for we may by now be forming a provisional conclusion that what, in political studies, is precise and agreed is, at most, likely to be trivial. But far from sharing this view, the classic founders of the notion of the elite, Mosca and Pareto, thought of their efforts as completely scientific and objective. Both writers were prone to dismiss all political works previous to their own as ideological ravings. However, both were, inevitably, ideologically involved in their times. Both were concerned, in different ways, to refute many essential elements of Marxism, and, as a result, both were hailed, or reviled, as conservative ideologists. In fact Mosca came to hold a reverence for the middle class, which, in his eyes, comprised the ruling elite in properly run liberal democracies. And Pareto, in his regard for the high qualities of the ruler, became inclined to see the merits of caesarism. Mosca explained the governing position of an elite largely in terms of a minority's intrinsically superior capacity to control the mechanisms of political organization where the majority is apathetic or disunited. Pareto's system relies partly on a somewhat sweeping notion of the quality and unequal distribution of human characteristics. Each writer produced typologies of forms of government in terms of the kinds of elites exercising control over them, though neither was entirely clear as to the nature and extent of social and political coherence within their respective elites—did members of an elite espouse the same policies, or did they merely occupy similar roles and positions, or was it attitudes and styles of life which were shared?

The academic literature on elites follows many paths, few of which touch explicitly on matters relating to foreign policy. A possible exception to this curiously parochial side of political sociology may be found in the contribution of Mills (1956), even though this author, in this instance, is concerned wholly with modern American society. As indicated, Mosca and Pareto were in some measure concerned to refute the Marxist view that government, the state, is in the hands, directly or indirectly, of that class in society which controls the means of production. Their explanations were framed in terms of human qualities, the values of society which give social position to specific categories of men, and the intrinsic efficiency of relatively small groups. Succeeding contributors to this subject have sometimes been concerned to fuse these approaches by drawing into their analysis of elites questions relating to the economic sub-

structure and the organizational superstructure of the society concerned. Mills may be placed in this general category in his concern to explain the status and power of the elite primarily in terms of social and economic structure and organization, rather than in terms of values or human qualities. He does not ignore human qualities but holds that these are controlled in terms of organization. So from the viewpoint of Mills power in modern American society attaches to institutions—the corporations, the military, and the political executive or 'directorate'. These institutions determine the nature of power in society. They are hierarchical and those who hold their 'command posts' constitute the elite. The elite is defined and selected by these institutions and only as such is composed of people supposed to be of superior character or energy. The solidarity of the elite is determined by the degree to which the institutions they lead overlap. Where these organizations are disjointed then the elite is disjointed; where they coincide the elite becomes a coherent group. When a power elite comes into existence it is by means of the hierarchical interconnections of large-scale institutions. The elite is at its strongest and most coherent when those holding the commanding heights freely interchange between one institution and another. Mills explains (1956, 288):

> The inner core of the power elite consists, first, of those who interchange commanding roles at the top of one dominant institutional order with those in another: the admiral who is also a banker and a lawyer who heads up an important federal commission; the corporation executive whose company was one of the two or three leading war material producers who is now the Secretary of Defence; the wartime general who dons civilian clothes to sit on the political directorate and then becomes a member of the board of directors of a leading economic corporation.

By this process power becomes more and more concentrated. And in the United States, as Mills saw it in the 1950s, power had become so centralized as to invalidate the liberal view that democracy was safeguarded by the competition and conflict of separate institutions and separate elites.

Mills noted with radical alarm the intrusion of the power elite, particularly the military branch of it, into American foreign relations (1956, 206):

> The military ascendancy and the downfall of diplomacy have occurred precisely when, for the first time in United States history, international issues are truly at the centre of the most important national decisions and increasingly relevant to virtually all decisions of consequence. With the elite's acceptance of military definitions of world reality, the professional diplomat . . . has simply lost any effective voice in the higher circles. . . . Every man and every nation is either friend or foe, and the idea of enmity becomes mechanical, massive, and without genuine passion.
>
> When virtually all negotiation aimed at peaceful agreement is likely to be seen as 'appeasement', if not treason, the active role of the diplomat becomes meaningless; for diplomacy becomes merely a prelude to war or an interlude between wars, and in such a context the diplomat is replaced by the warlord.

These words clearly spring as much from conviction as observation. The mixture is a little confusing for it is difficult to know whether the prominence of 'warlords' springs from the technical changes in the nature of war which have taken place since 1941, or from some kind of conspiracy within the elite. And it would seem, oddly, that Mills held in high regard the traditional forms of European diplomacy. Yet if anything was elitist that was; and very similar charges of war-mongering were commonly levelled at it by radical opinion, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States during and after the First World War, the period which saw its virtual demise. Mills was a polemic of a high and invigorating order, and his evidence always contributes to his argument. For example, he makes much of the many commanding roles occupied by General George C. Marshall. Yet it is a thin argument which suggests that the actions of so strong a character should be fully determined by the roles he occupied. And the Marshall Plan for European recovery (an aspect of recent American foreign policy unmentioned by Mills) refuses to appear militarist or villainous from almost any viewpoint. Similarly, Mills's treatment of the political 'directorate' mentions the drift of power from the legislative branch to the executive branch and makes much of the elite dominated nature of 'the fifty-odd men of the executive branch' (231): yet the office of President, held by one extremely powerful man, not a group, is virtually unmentioned. And it can be readily argued that this office, for all its authority, is hedged around by many constraints, both formal and informal. Not least among the latter may be a sense of weakness felt by the incumbent when attempting to carry a policy against the military

and the major corporations, within whose ambit it lies according to Mills. As Parry notes (1969, 64), it was Eisenhower, an apparently role-dominated core member of the circulating power elite, who warned his countrymen in 1957 against the influence of the 'military-industrial complex' in 'every city, every State House, every office of the Federal Government.' Whether this warning was taken very seriously at the time is open to doubt. But it can hardly be doubted that after prolonged involvement in Vietnam suspicion of the 'military-industrial complex' became a respectable commonplace of American politics. Thus elite theories may enter politics and, in doing so, may disprove themselves in practice.

This is not to argue that Mills was completely wrong. It is rather to suggest that his contribution falls primarily in the category of 'conspiracy theories' (see Parry 1969, 64-5) which are a recurrently popular feature of political discourse, both in the United States and elsewhere. When power is being used in ways which the observer feels to be undesirable, or when power is simply not being used in ways he feels to be desirable, it is a common enough reaction, well documented in historical terms, to search out a conspiracy of some kind which may be held responsible. If no formal evidence of conspiracy can be unearthed an informal conspiracy can readily be detected in a social or professional or religious group of some kind. In Marxist demonology capitalists can conspire even though they are also at loggerheads. In this kind of way there are some similarities to be found between the populist radicalism of Mills and the less reputable, though also populist, activities of his contemporary, Senator J. McCarthy. Similarly, the notion that the instruments of policy, the army, the diplomatic service, the bureaucracy, have in fact taken over the formulation of policy is as old as radicalism itself, and is a common enough feature of political discourse, radical and otherwise, in the United Kingdom. Arguments of such a kind may have some truth in them. But one is entitled to feel a little suspicious about the ready way in which they come to hand among all sectors of political opinion: a radical conspiracy controls the universities, a reactionary conspiracy controls the City, a conservative conspiracy controls the trade unions, and so on. And, of course, any argument conducted entirely in terms of conspiracy theory is likely to be pathological. In United States terms, for example, an argument relating to anti-missile systems which is framed in terms of the 'military-industrial complex' but entirely neglects the involved cases for and against such systems is, at best, unconvincing. Similarly,

to make much of the point, as Mills does (203), that a general, Walter Bedell Smith, was American ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1947 explains nothing about the extreme deterioration in Soviet-American relations taking place at that time. Additionally, it would be strange indeed if officials having immediate charge of large-scale military or diplomatic resources had no views about how they should be used. It would also be undesirable. That such officials should have no actual control of activities of state is an ancient pre-occupation of democratic theory and practice, to which writers such as Mills contribute relatively little.

Elite theory is something of a morass, an emotive one at that, and to suggest, for example, that the essential unit of foreign policy is the 'power elite' in the Mills sense would be to become involved in a somewhat high-pitched polemic. And at a rather more serious level, the monolithic elitist view of modern mass societies collides with the view, of similar age and greater respectability, that modern, particularly western, societies are in essence pluralist systems which are controlled by the inter-play of group activities. This latter view can even be extended to totalitarian societies: here groups are relatively few, and probably official, but nevertheless political outcomes are determined by their conflict and inter-play. From this viewpoint the essential unit of foreign policy would seem to be the concentrated field of group conflict and resulting group equilibrium. The prospect of handling this notion in foreign policy terms would probably drive one back first to the idea of political system, thence gratefully into the arms of the state, were it not that empirical research in this general area has yielded some important concrete results with significant, though somewhat less concrete, side-effects on foreign policy studies. The contribution of Dahl (1961) is particularly noteworthy in this connection.

A point common to many versions of elite theory is that politicians, the direct representatives of the masses as it were, exercise relatively little influence over policy, which is in the hands of more permanent elite forces who enjoy wealth, status, or pivotal organizational positions of some kind. Dahl investigated this kind of proposition in the concrete terms of New Haven politics. In order to test the extent of the supposed elite's power he delineated three separate 'issue-areas' and investigated the nature of decision-making within each of them. The three decision-areas so distinguished were public schooling, urban development and planning, and decisions relating to political nominations. The decisions studied in each of these

issue-areas were those which principal participants regarded as of major importance. Dahl distinguished three possible categories of leadership: those holding elective offices, those enjoying high social status, and those prominent by virtue of business interests and positions. Dahl found these groups to be fairly distinct—members of families of high social status tended to enter the professions rather than business. Such 'social notables' were also far from dominant in the possession of public offices. 'Economic notables' were more publicly active, but they almost exclusively devoted their attentions to the issue-area of urban development. But even within this area they were divided among themselves. The overall numbers of both social and economic notables rendered them negligible so far as disposable votes were concerned at elections.

Dahl found that one of the strongest influences bearing on the judgements of political office-holders and political activists was their assessment of the political reactions of others to their own actions and policies. In this regard, the effect of voting on the minds of activists was of the greatest importance. So far as actual and continual influence upon decisions was concerned the situation was complex. Dahl considers that society (American society) contains large numbers of minority groups among which political resources are unequally divided. Leaderships of these groups vary greatly in efficiency, energy, exclusivity, and the kind of time-scale over which office is held. These group leaders participate in public policy-making in an uneven fashion, and are sometimes only drawn in by matters which touch directly upon their immediate interests. Politicians attempt to store up support by building up connections with as many group leaderships as possible: they feel that if their policies or promised policies do not appeal to a substantial plurality of minorities they will not receive sufficient support in elections to put them in office or maintain them there. So the actual disposition of power is far more complicated than any simple elitist notion might indicate. More important, for present purposes, than this general 'polyarchal' position of Dahl was his finding in the case of New Haven that as between the three issue-areas he defined, the overlap among group leaders was very small indeed. In many respects New Haven had three distinct political systems whose boundaries coincided with the issue-areas; crossing boundaries was a rare phenomenon among group leaders. And understanding acquired by the observer of one of these systems did not confer understanding of the other two, though it could clearly contribute to an understanding of political arrangements

as a whole. Influence was exercised differently within each of these systems, and specialization implied a good deal of within-system expertise on the part of the more active group leaders.

The next step to foreign policy takes us to the suggestions of Lowi (1964), who has developed a notion analogous to Dahl's issue-area on a national (American) scale. Theorizing in the area of domestic politics, Lowi suggests that the ways people relate to one another are determined by their expectations as to the benefits attaching to such relationships. Expectations about politics are determined by government policies. It therefore follows that patterns of political relationships are determined by the kind of government policy which is involved. For every distinctive kind of policy there is a distinctive patterning of political relationships. These, in Lowi's terms, are 'arenas' of power and each arena has its own group relations, its own elites, its own political structure. Lowi distinguishes three domestic arenas: distribution of resources, regulation of resources, and redistribution of resources. And the political models appropriate to these arenas are respectively: coalition, pluralist, and elitist. Policies involving distribution of resources (tariffs, for example) may be parcelled out among political participants in relatively small isolated packets: patronage and fairly loose coalition formation are appropriate political arrangements for the determination of such policies. Regulatory policies (the framing of general laws, for example) require direct, perhaps large-scale, choice about who gets what, and this cannot readily be reduced to a discrete style: a much more interlocking mode of political activity is therefore appropriate to regulatory choice. Redistributive policies (income tax, for example) are often large-scale too, but their impact is much greater, their manipulation much more subtle: this is the arena where elites operate. Lowi's proposals are more complex than need be suggested here. Dahl and Lowi are relevant in the present context primarily because they have stimulated Rosenau (1967) to extend the general notion of issue-area to the analysis of foreign policy. The generality of the concept of political system has a number of faults, not least of which is its implication that all issues are dealt with in the same manner—that is, that there is a single political system. Dahl has demonstrated the inapplicability of this concept in a concrete situation, and Lowi has suggested that what applies to New Haven on a small scale applies, in a somewhat different form, to the United States on a large scale. The United States is not one political system but several; and the nature of any one system is controlled by the kinds of

issues or policies with which it deals. In a sense, it is suggested that an issue calls into being a system or power arena. By extension this insight would seem to suggest that the accurate unit of foreign policy is not the state or the political system or elites but the arena appropriate to foreign policy issues.

It is this implication which Rosenau takes up and his first concern is to distinguish the foreign policy issue-area from domestic issue-areas. This procedure involves, as in the case of Dahl and Lowi, an initial definition, which, in Rosenau's approach, is this (1967, 22):

> By 'foreign' policy as an issue-area are meant all the controversies within a society that, at any moment in time, are being waged over the way in which the society is attempting to maintain or alter its external environment. The attempts to exercise control over the environment constitute 'foreign policy', whereas the controversies engendered by the attempts (or lack of them) comprise the 'issue-area'. Once an attempt is no longer controversial, either because it comes to be accepted or because changes in the external environment allow it to be modified or abandoned, then the issue-area is diminished accordingly.

In this setting Rosenau enquires into the nature of the foreign policy political system. Do foreign policy issues involve distinctive motivations, roles, and forms of political interaction? More specifically, he is concerned to discover whether foreign and domestic issues differ in the sense of involvement they create (motivational intensity), whether they differ in the number of generally rousing issues they contain (motivational extensity), whether the roles activated by issues in each area differ in number and identity, and whether issues in each area vary in the degree of political interaction they engender (1967, 23). Starting from the simplifying assumption that foreign and domestic areas operate independently, Rosenau finds much in these categories to distinguish them qualitatively. In the category of motivations, foreign policy issues are far more likely to create a sense of identity within the political system as a whole than are domestic issues. Foreign policy deals essentially with items outside the system and is thus likely to create a 'them-us' outlook; whereas domestic issues place members in opposition in such a way that they do not raise the question of common system membership, except in revolutionary circumstances. International war is the ultimate manifestation of motivational simplicity created by foreign policy, while the relative frequency with which bipartisanship can be achieved in foreign as opposed to domestic fields is its more

common form. In situations of intense domestic schism it is not uncommon for political leaders to emphasize foreign threats of some kind in order to create some sort of consensus. Yet, though foreign policy may stimulate intense motivations, the extent and number of motivational issues is much less in the foreign than in the domestic area. Foreign issues may occasionally rouse large numbers of people, but the more common, though possibly less intense, political motivations will attach to domestic matters which touch immediate concerns more closely than do the ordinary range of foreign policy questions. And opinion about events in foreign countries does not, as a rule, weigh heavily upon political processes within one's own country. More commonly such opinions are the offshoot of some domestic issue. In this sense, for example, in the United States questions and views about race relations in other countries are sometimes part of the material used in domestic issues in this area; but motivational intensity about race in South Africa, for example, will be minute compared with that roused by such an issue in New York. Events in South Africa or any other foreign country are seldom seen to touch upon the political processes of the United States, and little sense of control or 'subjective competence' will attach to them. Rosenau quotes the findings of Almond and Verba that in five countries studied 'the sense of subjective competence occurs more frequently vis-à-vis the local government than the national government' (Almond and Verba, 1963, 184-5). Almond and Verba suggest that sense of participation depends on the structure of government and the structure of community organization: by extension, Rosenau argues that non-participation in many foreign policy matters is related to the highly executive form of government brought to bear upon them and to the remoteness of the subjects themselves. So it is not essentially parochialism which explains the commonly more intense involvement in domestic than in foreign policy issues, but the different structures of the two areas. This is not to argue that the events of the external environment do not affect the domestic environment. It is clearly the case that they do (more commonly in matters touching on international economic relations). But, argues Rosenau (1967, 30), however interdependent domestic and international systems are shown to be, citizens will most often be roused by matters touching their immediate concerns and their political activities will be directed at controlling detrimental forces where they are felt, not where they originate, if that be in the international environment.

Most systems appoint special officials to look to international concerns. The extent of such officials' concern towards foreign developments will be far greater than that of ordinary citizens, but their motivational intensity is likely to be less. Being aware of both the intractability of international relations and of the relatedness of international and national happenings, they are likely to move with caution and moderation and to be content with partial solutions. This is not to say that governments do not give way at times to panic and extreme action in foreign affairs. But Rosenau holds (1967, 34) that in broad terms the motivational gap between policy-maker and the citizen is far greater in the foreign policy issue-area than in domestic issue-areas. Two bridges span this gap. First, those occasional foreign policy issues which rouse intense motivational concern and political activity among ordinary citizens. Second, and more regularly, the activities of non-governmental intellectuals whose sense of common involvement in international events, or whose special knowledge, lead them to pay close attention to international issues.

Rosenau turns next to the place of roles, arguing that issues and the chains of events they initiate are perceived as structures of overlapping roles. A peculiar characteristic of foreign policy issues is that they necessarily include foreign role-occupants. A controversy attaching to the international environment cannot be settled, as a rule, without the acquiescence, forced or otherwise, of foreigners. It therefore follows that the achievement of domestic consensus will not necessarily resolve a foreign policy issue as is almost certain to be the case with a domestic issue. If the external environment refuses to conform to the expectations upon which internal consensus depends, the issue concerned will not be resolved by a particular policy but will be re-opened and, perhaps, the earlier consensus destroyed. Another important distinction of role structure between domestic and foreign policy arenas is one of frequency. Far more roles become involved far more often in domestic than in foreign policy issues. Roles specifically concerned in the linkage between domestic affairs and international affairs are clearly very few in most societies. At the leadership level a very limited number of people will be exclusively involved with foreign affairs. Most of those who do concern themselves in this area will hold multi-issue roles, such as newspaper editorships. The single-issue roles involved, for example, in questions related to nuclear disarmament (a few international lawyers, some geneticists, some specialist engineers and political

scientists), will be numerically far smaller than the multi-issue leadership likely to participate in such an issue (church leaders, politicians, journalists and so on). The reverse is likely to be the case in a domestic issue, such as road development. Similarly, a foreign policy issue is more likely to stimulate intense concern among national leaders than among local leaders. Again, the reverse may well be the case with many domestic issues.

In the matter of interaction differences, Rosenau distinguishes two pattern variables. First is the degree of interaction, 'that is, the extent to which the parties to an issue act independently or in response to each other.' Second is the direction of interaction, 'that is, the extent to which interaction unfolds vertically through hierarchical channels or horizontally among relatively equal actors' (1967, 42). In relation to direction of interaction, Rosenau suggests that all political systems faced with the functional requirement of united action in international affairs have concentrated political responsibility in this arena. So the pattern is pyramidal and interaction converges on the top leadership which is the primary target of protest, pressure, and advice in a foreign policy issue. The domestic arena is not so hierarchical: many issues, for example, may be attached to local concerns and may be open to settlement at that level. The direction of interaction likewise differs markedly in the two issue-areas. The pursuit of policy decision in the domestic arena is likely to involve bargaining and consensus-building; the primary need is for support in a situation where power is scattered but values largely shared. Interaction in this legislative context is diffuse and responsive. In the foreign policy arena, interaction patterns will be sharply different. This is not, in general terms, an arena of legislative action, with all the concern for bargaining and support-acquisition which the passage of legislation in liberal democracies entails. Action in the foreign policy field is commonly executive action. So those sections of opinion concerned with a foreign policy issue are relatively unconcerned about conciliation and consensus-formation, and are inclined to 'move independently up the slopes of the pyramid of executive authority' (1967, 44). The pressing of relatively unaggregated views upon the executive is therefore a not uncommon feature of political action in the foreign policy issue-area, where rival contestants often do not see themselves as specific claimants to the alternative use of scarce public funds, with all the need for persuasion and trimming which this kind of political action commonly requires. Only in relatively

exceptional cases does the attempt to arrange matters in the external environment involve an intense degree of horizontal interaction. These are the cases where foreign policy requires large-scale expenditure of public resources and the use of large-scale human effort. An obvious example is the deployment of force or the threat of force in international relations. Here it may happen that those with a concern over policy become directly engaged with each other, perhaps at a very intense horizontal level. Rosenau suggests that 'at this point the executive process of issue-handling is no longer appropriate to the situation and the outwardly directed policy comes to dominate the internal politics of the society' (1967, 47). He offers the example of the Algerian issue in French politics; to this, of course, might readily be added the issue of Vietnam in American politics. As an example of the contrary case, where a major foreign policy issue is settled by largely executive action in a domestic atmosphere of calm, if not of entire apathy, Rosenau points to the negotiation and conclusion of the Japanese peace settlement. This entailed virtually no use of public funds or direct human involvement on the part of American citizens. Only in a small matter involving North Pacific fishing rights did pressure group activity become intense (and effective). So, concludes Rosenau: 'The more an issue encompasses a society's resources and relationships, the more will it be drawn into the society's domestic political system and the less will it be processed through the society's foreign political system' (1967, 49). Cimbala (1969) finds much empirical support for this conclusion in his study of Congressional behaviour. Those issues coming close to the domestic end of the domestic-foreign continuum (foreign aid, for example) are likely to be treated in the style of redistributive domestic matters. Similarly, it would seem that items of this kind are treated by Congressmen in a discrete fashion, rather than in terms of sweeping doctrines. In the past, of course, numbers of sweeping doctrines have been attached to American aid and projects for such aid.

The development of the notion of issue-area in the hands of Rosenau is clearly significant to the delineation of units of foreign policy. It is the absence of distinctive issues which is one of the main defects of the Modelski model. However, though Rosenau's contribution is clearly an acute and distinguished one, its merits are more those of promise than achievement. The essence of Dahl's issue-areas and Lowi's power-arenas lies in their multiplicity. There are a number of issue-areas, it is suggested, in domestic politics.

Yet Rosenau's analysis treats domestic politics as a whole, and this is set in distinction to the politics attaching to foreign policy issues as a whole. It would seem that merely two political systems are perceptible—the domestic policy system and the foreign policy system. This would seem not to be an entirely logical extension of the contributions of Dahl and Lowi. If the foreign policy system is to be retained as a single unit merging into the domestic system, it becomes necessary to be more specific about which domestic system it merges into. If it does not merge into one but into several domestic political systems the implication would seem to be that foreign policy politics do not comprise one issue-area but several. And this kind of conclusion is suggested by some of the examples cited by Rosenau: the distinction he makes between the Algerian war in French politics and the Japanese peace settlement in American politics is a powerful one, so powerful indeed as to suggest that these represent two different issue-areas, rather than different aspects of the same issue-area. In the case of the United Kingdom, for example, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that policy towards the reform of the international monetary system constitutes a very different issue-area from questions relating to policy towards Ireland. Examples such as these are not hard to find. But the main burden of Rosenau's contribution is to distinguish the foreign policy issue-area as a whole, largely in terms of pattern variables, from the domestic issue-area as a whole. This style then leads him to regard, or seem to regard, politics as a continuum, in which foreign policy issues, such as Algeria in the French case, merge into the domestic issue-area. Thus we are returned, it would seem, to some notion of *the* political system.

Yet to move in the opposite direction is not without hazards. The possibility of distinguishing numbers of issue-areas in foreign policy does not appear overwhelmingly difficult. Indeed the reverse would seem to be the case, because most foreign policy issues involve different groups of foreigners who are likely to behave differently and have a different impact on domestic politics. Pursuing an earlier example, one might say that the issues connected with Ireland differ in almost all respects from the issues connected with the international monetary system, and that these issues differ from the Common Market issue. But within the Common Market issue, the agricultural issue differs from the industrial issue; and both these differ from the political issue. Where can one end? In this kind of way the notion of issue-area could become a retreat from analysis. Foreign policy

becomes more and more a matter of discrete issue-areas. In fact it is likely to become entirely concrete, the bit-by-bit application of government and politics to specific issues as they occur. This, in present terms, comes precariously close to foreign policy as practice.

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part three

The arena of foreign policy



9

Systems

If foreign policy can reasonably be conceived as a stream of outgoing transactions, it follows that it can reasonably be studied from the viewpoint of the arena within which those transactions take place. In this way foreign policy becomes an item in a larger system. One might even go a step further and suggest that the nature of foreign policy cannot be adequately grasped unless some attempt is made to come to intellectual terms with its most important dimension, which exists in the field of global relations. It is here that foreign policy acquires substance, and it is within this arena that its fate is determined. Foreign policy is not merely directed at the international environment, it is also, if one raises the level of one's analysis, a part of the international environment. This is the case in the sense that one foreign policy is clearly a feature of the environment of other foreign policies, but it is also the case in the sense that all foreign policies are part of the texture of the international system as a whole. So the environmental viewpoint can be sub-divided. First, one might attempt to construct a model of the international system as a whole, and then attempt to locate foreign policy within it. Or, second, one might assume foreign policies to be the essential component of international systems: it then becomes possible to arrange different foreign policy configurations in distinct systems, each with distinctive characteristics and distinctive imperatives for the individual participant. In the first case, the state need not figure prominently; in the second, the state, as mediator between policy and system, is likely to loom larger. The procedure in this chapter will be to examine each of these analytical alternatives in turn, to assess

their strengths and weaknesses and to compare their analytical possibilities.

The first alternative will be discussed initially in terms of the systems analysis of David Easton, who has stated his position with the utmost clarity:

> Not only is there an international political system, but it may in fact be usefully interpreted as just another type of system, to be analysed, described, and compared with all other systems. It is not any more atypical or unique than other classifications of systems each of which, for special purposes, may be distinguished from the other (1965b, 485).

Some features of the Eastonian system were incorporated into a model of national political system in chapter seven. Largely in recapitulation Easton's minimal concepts for the systems analysis of politics must now be briefly specified (See Easton, 1965b, 21-33). A political system encloses those interactions whereby values are authoritatively allocated for a society. The system exists within an environment which is partly intra-societal and partly extra-societal. The term 'disturbances' indentifies those influences or flows from the total environment which act upon the system in such a way that it is different after such a stimulus from what it was before. All political systems allocate values for a society; they must also induce most of the members of the society to accept such allocations. No society, in Easton's view, can exist without the performance of these functions. They are, therefore, the essential variables of political life. Stress occurs when it seems that the essential variables may be pushed beyond what Easton designates as their 'critical range'; this is likely to happen when the environment is so convulsed, by war or some other social disaster, that authorities are unable to make decisions, or, if they attempt to do so, their allocations are no longer regarded as binding. Frequently stress will not completely destroy a system in this way and the essential variables will continue to operate below this critical, destructive, point. So the system has some capacity to cope with stress. Inputs serve as 'summary variables that concentrate and mirror everything in the environment that is relevant to political stress' (1965b, 26). They are used by Easton as indicators to sum up the most important effects crossing the boundary into the political system. These effects are focused in two major kinds of inputs; demands, which require authoritative action, and supports, which attach, as we have seen, to a political

community, a regime, and a set of authorities. Outputs are the outflowing consequences of the system's treatment of its raw material, inputs. The effects of outputs on the environment have an impact on succeeding inputs by the feedback process, which is part of a continuous flow. The vast number of demands entering the system are regulated and reduced by structural mechanism ('gatekeepers', for example, having a powerful reducing effect); or by cultural mechanisms (norms, for example, having some control over permissible demands); or by various kinds of aggregative channelling (the formation of issues, for example, having a considerable manipulative effect on demands).

In Easton's view this concept of political system is universal and is in no way bound to a domestic society. Any set of relationships, national or international, which makes authoritative allocations for a society constitute a political system, and it is of no matter whether the grounds of compliance and support are legitimacy, force, habit, or expediency, though in most cases a combination of these will apply. Where acceptance depends on force, social costs are high; and where it depends on expediency, there will be an unavoidable indeterminacy in the effectiveness of outputs, and this kind of situation can be 'indefinitely tolerated only by systems in which the pace of life is slow, change is infrequent, and functional interdependence weak' (1965b, 286). However, in Easton's view, the international political system is by no means entirely reduced to this level. International life may, he contends (1965b, 485-7), be designated as an international society. It has a culture of its own, of which international law and custom are manifestations. There is an international economy, distinct from constituent national economies. There is even a social structure within which nations are stratified according to power and prestige, and individuals meeting in an international context do so in a stratified social setting. The international political system differs from other political systems only in that its component units consist of large and powerful subsystems and regional groupings among them. The Eastonian system not only comprehends this situation, it also, in its author's view, has the inherent capacity to handle new kinds of actors with an ease unknown to other conceptual approaches to international politics. For example, the increasing way in which individuals have become oriented to world affairs introduces a new kind of actor which can be incorporated as a direct rather than derivative component in the international system.

Members of the international society look to a resolution of their problems through authoritative international allocations. Demands are fed into the international political system, and, in a discontinuous way, they are converted into outputs. The authorities in the case of the international system 'are considerably less centralized than in most modern systems, less continuous in their operation, and more contingent on events, as in the case of primitive systems' (1965b, 487). Yet the great powers and, more recently, a number of international organizations, have, intermittently, resolved differences and made authoritative allocations. They have, in Easton's view, acted in the role of authorities. Easton also holds that the international system has a regime: rules and expectations apply to the relations among actors, though they may be less regular than in many national systems. And, third, some sense of political community, political togetherness in the face of life's hazards, prevails in the international society, though again it hardly reaches the intensity of political community in many national systems.

In this kind of way, then, the Eastonian system applies at all levels of political activity, including, most importantly in the present context, the international level. Each level would seem to require subdivision, in Easton's view, but he holds that 'the underlying body of major categories of analysis would not need to differ'. Easton's systemic conception is open to a number of general criticisms. Here it is necessary to concentrate primarily on the degree to which it can be said to illuminate the actualities of international politics and foreign policy. In this connection Easton's scheme is most obviously open to criticism in its more clearly structural elements. To begin at this level, it will be recalled that support attaches to authorities, regime, and political community. Of the first element of this trinity, Easton writes (1965b, 216):

> Every system, we know. must be prepared to support some members who will be ready, willing, and able to pay some degree of special attention to seeing to it that differences are settled or handled in some way that is acceptable to the politically relevant members at least . . . (If) the members of the system are unable to provide enough support for some set of authorities who can assume responsibility for the daily affairs of the system and provide initiative and direction in identifying problems and taking some steps towards their resolution, the system must collapse, for want of leadership as we might say.

As Nicolson and Reynolds (1967, 23) point out, it is extraordinarily difficult to detect anything in global relations which meets these conditions. Men acting in the context of international organizations such as the United Nations occasionally make acceptable allocations. But this does not resolve the theoretical difficulty because 'authorities' in the international setting are intermittently active and often elusive. Who, in the context of a given problem, is going to act? Perhaps the United Nations will take the matter up; but perhaps (and commonly) it will put it rapidly down again; or perhaps it will not make a move at all; or perhaps its move will be entirely ignored. It is impossible to know in advance 'who in relation to a particular demand can or will act as the authority, and to whom is support to be given' (Nicolson and Reynolds, 1967, 23). Where authoritative allocation is excessively unstable, or cannot be located in a coherent manner, the Easton system would seem to collapse. Or perhaps it cannot be applied in the first place. Easton would seem to suggest that a condition of the applicability of his system is that outputs must be processed by authorities; it is not sufficient that key members of the system should merely decide among themselves what to do. Yet this is a recurrent feature of international life. The Munich agreement of September 1938, for example, was fixed between the representatives of France, Britain, Germany and Italy. No global authorities were involved. Yet this action was authoritative, having immense actual and repercussive effects on European and world politics.

It is not that global relations are without authorities, but that the identity of authorities is often so much in question. Equally, the nature of their support-evoking actions is not without ambiguity. Easton suggests that if no set of persons can mobilize enough support to enable them to put into effect necessary day-to-day decisions the system will become paralysed. But normally 'this outcome is avoided through the introduction of forcible compliance, a special kind of response that meets the loss of support through coercion' (Easton, 1965b, 216). In a sense, this kind of authoritative output is a common feature of international life. As an example, one might say that the *status quo* in Europe is currently the product of forcible compliance. But it cannot be conceded that this is the response of a set of authorities lacking other kinds of support. In the first place, the set of authorities concerned is not coherent in any kind of organizational sense. There is no concert of Europe. And all the powers directly and indirectly involved share few common attitudes to a European settlement. The *status quo* is the product of the conjunction of a large

number of domestic and foreign policies, many of which are backed by substantial force. But the disposition of this force is in no way intended to generate support for international authorities. It is intended to prevent the situation from changing to the apparent detriment of particular powers and groups of powers. This kind of disposition of force, which is, in itself, of the highest physical order known, seems to fall entirely outside the Eastonian categories, if the concept of authorities is regarded as essential among them.

It is perhaps easier to detect some kind of regime in international society, that is, some constraints upon the actions of members, some rules, some expectations, some fears. Under this heading, presumably, one would include the accustomed procedures of diplomacy, international law in those very limited areas where it might be conceived to be effective, and the constraints states feel in their perception of their interests in an environment which is likely to punish them severely for excessive ambition. Yet it is the case that a regime such as this is an extremely imperfect one. The rules of diplomacy, international law, and suchlike, are far from universally observed. And the constraints of self-interest are essentially subjective and, as we have seen, open to argument. Finally, of course, this regime, such as it is, is one applicable to, and dependent upon, nation-states, and it is far from being clearly the case that Easton regards states as particularly relevant to his system. So two sorts of difficulties present themselves. First, there is the imprecise and imperfect nature of the international regime, and the very weak and intermittent nature of support for it. Second, there is the problem of the origin and object of such support. If it emanates from men, and this would appear to be so, does it attach to the constraints themselves or to the state system with which they are indissolubly connected? If the latter, then the outcome is that we say that men are grouped in states to which they give their support or allegiance. This is true but unremarkable.

The third object of support is political community, the sense of common political involvement, the sense of being in the same political boat. In this respect, it can reasonably be asserted that the peoples of the world are, in fact, in the same political boat, and if it goes down vast numbers of them are likely to go with it. But to say this is to say nothing about support for a notion of doing things together. It would seem, as Nicolson and Reynolds suggest (1967, 30), that support for political community is an essential variable of political system. If support for a particular domestic community

declines one way for this situation to be met is for the state concerned to transform itself into a federation, or to break up into different political communities. But this is not a conceivable course in the global system. It is broken up already. No community can yet break away to the extent of getting off the globe.

The second category of inputs into the Eastonian system is demands, which flow across the boundary from the societal environment. Here again Nicolson and Reynolds (1967, 25) have pointed to a major difficulty raised in transposing the Eastonian system to the global level, and this lies in detecting the source of demand inputs. The boundary round the international political system is in no sense simple. Do any demands pass directly into this political system? It is extraordinarily difficult to think of instances of such straightforward transactions. In most cases demands are mediated by large-scale structures, sometimes by international organizations of various kinds, but far more commonly by states. And given that these sub-systems, states that is, dominate the global system it would seem to follow that demands are advanced in furtherance of state autonomy and not because of any distinctively international or global qualities they may possess.

Alongside the problems of detecting the sources of demands is the problem of determining the nature and capacity of the channels along which they flow. At the global level, as has been indicated, there is often difficulty in perceiving the direction in which demands should proceed because of the difficulty of detecting appropriate authorities. Similarly, if authorities are located, channel capacity is likely to be so narrow that many demands become excluded or retarded: few demands can get through to the great powers. In Easton's system demands are arranged, reduced, and aggregated by cultural norms and by aggregative and reductive structures. At the global level, norms are so weak and imprecise as to have virtually no effect on demands, and international organizations are usually so dominated by states (the United Nations being an appropriate example) as to have few aggregative functions. International channels do not, as a rule, simplify or aggregate, so demands proceeding through the system are often substantive and conflicting. Demands are therefore likely to impose an almost permanent condition of stress upon the system.

Turning now to outputs, to authoritative allocations that is, it is clearly the case that in the global setting the international political system's outputs are rarely effective and even more rarely support-

inducing. This is partly because of the imperfections of the system as so far outlined. A question of perception also arises. Where does one look for the outputs of the international political system? And what relationship do they bear to input demands? Many international political activities are discreet if not entirely clandestine, many agreements are not formalized in statements or documents of any kind, and many outputs are mediated by distinct agencies, among which states are not the least prominent. When, for example, is an output the output of the international system and not the output of a state system or a group of state systems? Because of the difficulty of delineating authorities at the international political level, outputs, which are the product of authorities, can become self-defining. One could, for example, chose an output almost at random, the Curzon line for example, and moving backwards, as it were, distinguish the authorities responsible and designate these as much at the international systemic level. But, as suggested above, not only is this cheating, it also leads to the result that authorities are almost always national statesmen and almost always differ from time to time, and from issue to issue. And what happens to one's authorities if the output selected is later ignored, or instituted at a different time by different powers for different reasons?

In this kind of way, then, the applicability of Easton's system to global relations can be shown to be questionable. Attempting to locate foreign policy within it merely adds to the difficulties. Foreign policies would appear to be primary channels of both demands and supports and of feedback responses. Foreign policy formulation would also seem to be the primary reducing and aggregating process. Not only this, but because of the dominant position of national statesmen in global relations, the outputs of the international system would also seem to be expressed by, and channelled through, foreign policy. So, at the international level, foreign policy would seem to perform virtually all the functions of the Eastonian system. Yet, by definition, foreign policy is state-dominated. It would seem, therefore, that the Eastonian system is almost to be equated with foreign policy, and the message it conveys is that the international system is anarchical and state-dominated. Not merely is this a form of self-contradiction, it also advances us very little towards an understanding of foreign policy from the viewpoint of its international setting. If one resolutely ignores the state and regards, as Easton appears to, individuals as the essential element of international society, then the principal components of the Eastonian system find new detectable

parallels in the actualities of international relations. In this way the system becomes a style of analysis which concentrates on the conditions, as yet unfulfilled, of a global polity in which foreign policy would cease to exist. This comes close to the utopianism from which modern political analysis in the field of international relations is usually at some pains to free itself.

If one acknowledges that global relations are characterized by major cultural discontinuities, by the substantial indeterminacy, if not absence, of norms in relation to international roles (what is an 'international statesman'?), and by the largely uninstitutionalized nature of conflict and competition between many international actors, then it would seem to follow that a model of an integrated society cannot be applied directly to international politics (see Nettl and Robertson 1968, 129–86). If an attempt is made to think in terms of a system incorporating shared values, then many obvious features of international life become virtually inexplicable, not least of these being the deep ideological cleavages instantly apparent to the most cursory inspection. A fully comprehensive and integrated system cannot say much about the activities, let us say, of a representative of the Chinese People's Republic in relation to the activities of a representative of the United Kingdom. So it would seem necessary to drop any assumption of normative consistency and integration if one is to persist with the notion of a globally-applicable system. From here there are two paths forward. First, one may continue with extreme abstraction, in the style of Nettl and Robertson (1968), and attempt to say something about the formation of attitudes among elites operating at both the national and international levels. By definition this course rules out the possibility of saying anything very definite about foreign policy and the dangers it attempts to meet, though it may say much about how national elites compare themselves with one another, or fail to compare themselves with one another, in the context of concepts such as power or modernization. Second, one may abandon abstraction and attempt to comprehend all the actual factors of international life, from international organizations and regional groupings, to foreign ministries and military forces. The difficulty with this course is that it becomes so concrete as to be virtually non-analytical. In this case the use of the term 'system' becomes little more than a response to current fashion, for any tight conceptual arrangement has, by definition, been abandoned. What is conceptual and deductive cannot be related to what is actual since the initial distinction has been dissolved.

A way out of these difficulties seems to present itself if one abandons the attempt to be globally comprehensive. Systems analysis now becomes analysis in terms of several systems. It is possible to restrict the kinds of actors applicable to a particular kind of system or set of systems, to compare systems, to define the ground rules and boundaries of systems in a fairly rigorous way. This concept of system directs attention to specific sets of interacting variables. Each of these sets may be fairly strictly distinguished from its environment, and fairly clear explanations and predictions can be offered about the courses followed by the actors in such systems, provided the stated parameter conditions hold. In this way, systems analysis can be applied to international relations even though one takes the view that 'the international system may be characterized as a null political system' (Kaplan, 1957, 14). This is the approach of Morton Kaplan (1957) and it is to some aspects of his position that this essay must now turn. Kaplan's contribution to the analysis of international politics is a uniquely concentrated one and it would be impossible to convey in summary the full scope of his theoretical apparatus; in this case, as in many others touched on in this essay, there is no substitute for direct and close study. Here an attempt will be made simply to indicate some of the more powerful aspects, as well, perhaps, as some of the vulnerabilities of the Kaplan framework.

Kaplan conceptualizes six kinds of international systems. These are not exhaustive in his view (1968), but are sufficient for comparative purposes. They comprise: the balance of power system, the loose bipolar system, the tight bipolar system, the universal system, the hierarchical system, and the unit veto system. Here we shall concentrate largely on two of these constructs, the balance of power system and the loose bipolar system. But all the systems have some common characteristics: they have boundaries, they share a number of internal structures and elements (kinds of actors, kinds of actor capabilities, information factors, and system transformation rules), and, most importantly, they are distinguished by sets of essential rules. These systems have been constructed to include the specifications of three types of equilibrium. These have been summarized by Kaplan thus (1968): 'First, the essential rules are in equilibrium in the sense that a change in one rule will produce a change in at least one other rule. Second, a change in the set of rules will produce a change in other system characteristics, and vice versa. Third, the system is also in equilibrium with its environment; changes in the system will change the environment and vice versa.'

Kaplan's systems are essentially heuristic models, and only two, the balance of power system and the loose bipolar system, have had anything approaching historical counterparts. The four non-historical systems are included to offer the possibility of predicting the outcome of transformations in existing models; these outcomes are, in that sense, essential parts of existing systems (1957, 22). It is also desirable, in Kaplan's view, to predict how such non-historical systems would function if they arose. Before returning to the first two models, the nature of the non-historical models may be very briefly indicated, again following Kaplan's own summary (1968). In the unit veto system each actor has a massive nuclear capability; there is a relatively low probability of war because of the obviously disastrous implications of its initiation. By definition, there is no tendency for alliances to form, since the actors do not need to draw together for defence. But tension is high and the possibility of radical instability is imminent. The tight bipolar system obviously reduces essential participants to two uncommitted actors, international organizations other than those centred on one of the two parties having withered away. The universal system involves universal organization with important political powers (perhaps in the area of arms control) and with a greater strength, at minimum, than any one other actor. This system would require member actors to give high priority to international values and activities. The hierarchical international system might result from war and conquest, in which case it would be an authoritarian system, or it might result from a fundamental change in the scale of international organization, in which case it would probably be of a federal and democratic nature.

Turning from the more to the less hypothetical of the Kaplan models, the general characteristics of the balance of power system may now be outlined. It is a social system without a political subsystem. Its essential actors are national actors and there must be five or more of them. Each actor is motivated to increase its capabilities, but in doing so would prefer to negotiate than to fight. But if it does fight for such an end it will stop short of eliminating another essential actor. On the other hand, it will always oppose another actor or group of actors which attempts to dominate the system. It will also attempt to constrain any actor propounding some other, supranational, way of organizing the system. Each actor finds any other actor an acceptable partner in such pursuits: so new actors may enter the system fairly readily and defeated actors are quickly restored to full participation. These systemic rules are interdependent.

Their equilibrium results from discrete actions over lengthy periods. A relatively small change in the rules may have the effect of transforming the system after a lapse of time. And a line of action appearing to yield continuous capability rewards may tempt an actor to ignore the essential rules and this may also transform the system. As well, the balance of power system becomes unstable if a deviant national actor controls an international political party with the ability to exploit divisions within another actor. Constraining a deviant actor, such as Nazi Germany, may involve transgressing the rules requiring the pursuit of limited objectives, which in turn may have the effect of transforming the system. The necessity for at least five systemic actors is related to the necessity for coalitions which may preserve the system without themselves becoming either rigid or dominant. Coalition in a three-power system would clearly be dominant, and coalition in a four-power system would be either rigid or dominant. A five-power system permits flexibility but does not readily offer the prospect of dominance. If alignments become too fluid the system is likely to become chaotic, and to become transformed as a result of this disorder. If, on the other hand, for some extraneous reason such as permanent feelings of hostility, alignments become rigid, this also is likely to transform the system over time, since the balancing process will be impeded.

The loose bipolar system differs radically from the balance of power system. There are two major bloc actors, and within each bloc there are leading national actors. There are non-member national actors, and universal actors such as the UN. Each of these actors has distinctive roles in the system, so the system's essential rules are not the same for all actors. Kaplan specifies twelve essential rules for the system (1957, 38–9). The third, for example, legislates that 'all bloc actors are to increase their capabilities in relation to those of the opposing bloc.' But the fifth declares that 'all bloc actors are to engage in major war rather than to permit the rival bloc to attain a position of preponderant strength.' Yet the blocs are permitted a curious kind of universalism, for the sixth rule specifies that 'all bloc members are to subordinate objectives of universal actors to the objectives of their bloc but to subordinate the objectives of the rival bloc to those of the universal actor.' Non-bloc members of the system are altogether more altruistic, for rule seven requires that 'all non-bloc member national actors are to co-ordinate their national objectives with those of the universal actor and to subordinate the objectives of bloc actors to those of the universal actor.' Similarly,

under rule nine, non-bloc national actors 'are to act to reduce danger of war between bloc actors.' And under rules eleven and twelve, universal actors 'are to reduce the incompatibility between blocs' and 'to mobilise non-bloc member national actors against cases of gross deviancy, for example, resort to force, by a bloc actor.' This system is stable if the rules integrate the role functions within the system, though the nature of the blocs must clearly impose a severe strain upon stability. Each bloc must be able to defend itself against the other, for the rest of the actors are ineffective in this respect. The rules for non-bloc national actors. From these conditions follow the tions to any actor. And minor blocs must function according to the rules for non-bloc national actors. From these conditions follow the conditions likely to make the loose bipolar system unstable. If, for example, it becomes possible for national actors to withdraw from blocs, the system may be propelled towards a balance of power system. If a war produces stalemate, a tight bipolar system is likely to emerge. If the leading actor of a major non-hierarchical bloc uses its position of strength within the bloc to insist upon certain objectives, it may cause deviant behaviour among its fellow members, thus compromising the capabilities of the bloc. If a universal actor is successful in its stated role it may produce a real universal international system. And so on.

Having delineated the nature of some international systems, Kaplan turns his attention to the nature of actors, starting with national actors. These are divided into relatively directive and relatively non-directive, which are, in rough terms, dictatorial and democratic national actors. More technically, a system tends to be directive to the degree that it is hierarchical with directives flowing downwards from a very few controlling role occupants. Within these classifications there are two sub-categories: system dominant and subsystem dominant. A political system is dominant over its subsystems when the rules of the political system must be accepted (are parametric givens, in Kaplanese) by subsystems. A political system is subsystem dominant when the reverse is the case and the subsystem, a political party for example, need pay no particular attention to system rules. Thus, as an example (1957, 55), the United States is a non-directive, system dominant national actor, whereas the United Kingdom, with its stronger party system and, consequently, with its party-controlled executive, is a relatively subsystem dominant, non-directive national actor.

Next Kaplan specifies five choice ranges which classify international

actions in relation to national structures. The first refers to the organizational focus of decisions, that is, to the objects and instruments of policy which the state has available, the nature of its resources. If, for example, it has few domestic resources the focus of decisions will be internal. The second range refers to the way rewards are allocated by national actors; whether, for example, they are sparing of life and wealth or whether they are inclined to allocate resources to non-national actors. The third range specifies preferences for co-operation in the attainment of goals, the acceptability of other actors as allies. The fourth range specifies the level of organizational activity; whether, for example, the actor is active in the international system or indifferent to the nature of that system. And the fifth range refers to the adaptive quality of decisions; non-adaptive behaviour refers to activity which is self-defeating, perhaps because of the absence or inappropriateness of instruments.

Having constructed all these categories, Kaplan examines each type of behaviour with reference to type of actor and type of international system, holding other parameters, by and large, constant. We will not run over the finite range of possibilities which Kaplan exhausts but merely select a few examples of his treatment. At the first range (organizational focus), within the balance of power system, Kaplan finds that 'the directive, subsystem dominant actor will extend its primary attention to external considerations and will be able sufficiently to manipulate public opinion to carry out a diverse and rapidly changing policy,' whereas 'the non-directive, system dominant actor will pay primary attention to internal considerations in the formulation of policy' (1957, 60). Within the loose bipolar system, at the first range, 'both types of non-directive actor will succeed in paying more attention to external factors and in gaining more domestic support as a consequence to recognizable external danger, or the bipolar form of system will be replaced by a hierarchical system' (1957, 60–1). Moving to the second range (allocative principles), within the loose bipolar system, one finds, for example, that 'the directive, subsystem dominant actor, if it is a leading actor in a bloc, will identify bloc and national interests.' Perhaps less obviously: 'If the directive national actor is a member of a non-hierarchical bloc, it will value the bloc more highly than the international system. However, it will tend to subordinate its interests to those of the bloc less than does the non-directive national actor' (1957, 63). At the third range (preferences for alignment) one discovers that in the loose bipolar system, 'non-directive actors will not join blocs in

which the leading actor is directive and subsystem dominant, particularly if the dominant subsystem is a monolithic party with an international organization base' (1957, 67). At range four (specifying the level of organizational activity), in the balance of power system, 'none of the actors attempts to regulate the international system,' whereas in the loose bipolar system 'subsystem dominant, directive actors, if sufficiently strong, will have the capacity to regulate supranational groupings and to attempt to regulate the international system' (1957, 70). And at range five (adaptivity), in the loose bipolar system, 'the national actors that are bloc members are more adaptive with respect to intrabloc relations and less adaptive with respect to interbloc relations than are the national actors of the balance of power system in their relations with one another' (1957, 72).

After treating national actors in this style, Kaplan proceeds with a similar treatment of supranational actors. Bloc actors are divided into hierarchical, mixed hierarchical and non-hierarchical types: and hierarchical bloc actors are sub-divided into directive and non-directive categories. The mixed hierarchical bloc, exemplified by the communist bloc, is not fully hierarchical because it is more decentralized than is the Soviet Union. This type can hardly persist unless it is relatively directive. Non-hierarchical blocs are necessarily non-directive. They depend on strongly perceived joint interests, and tend to become unstable whenever the environment seems not to threaten. Finally Kaplan deals with the universal actor, which differs from a universal international system 'inasmuch as its rules are dominated both by the essential rules of the national actors who are members and also by the essential rules of the bloc actors who are not formally represented in it' (1957, 83). The most important role of the universal actor is to mediate in the relations of conflicting bloc actors.

Kaplan proceeds to consider the processes of systems. Here he defines and hypothesizes in the most general way, holding his analysis to apply to all kinds of social and political activity. These general findings are then applied to the international systems as delineated. He begins at the most general level with the regulatory process, which is the process 'by means of which a system attempts to maintain or preserve its identity over time as it adapts to changing conditions' (1957, 89). The regulatory capacity of a system measures the range of responses available to the system in meeting disturbances to its equilibrium. Flexibility in this matter is always relative to specified kinds of environmental problems. This capacity of the system is not

entirely dependent upon the structural elements of the system but also relates to the way in which these elements are arranged in networks. For example, Kaplan suggests that on a large scale the 'directive system will consistently consider and adjust to more external factors than the non-directive system. . . . (though) severe disturbances may so overload rigid decision makers that they cannot perform their role functions properly' (1957, 92). The explanation of this flexibility in the directive system lies, Kaplan asserts, in its division of labour; each decision-maker pays close attention to a specialized aspect of a problem. If this condition is removed the system as a whole may become rigid. This effect is produced because problems must be tackled at two minimal levels: first, at the level of dealing with individual difficulties as they arise; and second, at the strategic, or 'metatask', level where problems may be met on a large scale. Failure at either level (the first level in this case) throws a crippling weight onto the other level.

Still in the most general vein, Kaplan next considers integrative and disintegrative processes. Integrative processes are those which join systems with separate institutions and goals into a common framework 'providing for the common pursuit of at least some goals and the common implementation of at least some policies.' On the other hand, disintegrative processes 'produce instability within existing systems and organisations, although they may take place as a consequence of the attempt by subsystems of the larger system to maintain their stability' (1957, 98). The appearance of either of these processes depends partly upon the degree to which system members share strong common interests, and partly it depends on how the system structures its members and how it channels communications between them. In general, Kaplan suggests that disintegrative activities occur when a system is unable to cope with disturbances or when it is unable to satisfy the demands of its members. The more integrated a system, the more stable it is likely to be. This stability is likely to occur if the decisions of the system satisfy both systemic values and the values of member actors. And a set of decisions satisfying both these conditions is likely to be resistant to change. At the same time, in the long run, organizations (or systems) are stable if they can continue to scan all areas of possible disturbance, and if they are able to test the continuing adequacy of past decisions. A decision-making system is a kind of investment in regulatory capacity by member units; and when new problems come along it is often more efficient to refer them to the existing system than to set up a new one. There-

fore, Kaplan suggests, once the integrative process begins, other things being equal, it is likely to be self-reinforcing. The flexibility of a decision-making unit varies with the range of relevant data it is able to consider before reaching a decision. Kaplan defines a chain-of-command decision-making system as one where all actors are consulted but where only one actor has the right of decision. A persua sive system is one where all actors have equal weight in decision-making. And a veto decision-making system is one where a single actor may block a decision. These are 'polar types', so any concrete unit may have all three characteristics. However, Kaplan suggests that most modern complex political units approach the persuasive polar form.

Kaplan uses these (and other) definitions in framing nine sets of general hypotheses, only a few aspects of which will be mentioned here. Many of these hypotheses lean towards tautology. At the first hypothesis one finds that 'decision makers within a decision-making unit consider more significant policy alternatives. . . . . the greater the number of decision-making roles in the unit that are filled by decision makers who perform multiple role functions. . . . (and) the more the decision makers are persuasive rather than chain-of-command' (1957, 104–5). Similarly, at hypothesis two, we discover that people who occupy a number of roles see the matters involved in those roles in a more connected manner than do single-role occupants. Hypothesis three indicates that integration is inhibited by insulation between members of a set: this inoffensive suggestion is supported by a table of insulating effects, such as that important rule functions insulate against unimportant role functions. At the fourth hypothesis it is suggested that a decision-making unit which is unable to come to grips with its own system will have little capacity for dealing with external problems, in which it may display a degree of rigidity. Hypothesis five draws on the concept of legitimacy in suggesting that the longer a decision-making unit remains in being, the greater the integration of its major role occupants, and the more likely is it to be perceived 'as an entity with both independent and legitimate objectives' (1957, 109). The sixth hypothesis suggests that the greater the solidarity and legitimacy of a decision-making unit the more likely are its members to view the divergent demands of other units of which they are members as deviant. In the same way, the next hypothesis states: 'If solidarity develops within a decision-making unit the role holders of which represent other decision-making units, the role holders may view the units they represent as deviant in case

of conflict between the units' (1957, 111). The eighth hypothesis suggests that as solidarity among a set of decision-making units increases the range of significant alternative bases for action considered decreases. And the ninth hypothesis both concludes and summarizes in suggesting that 'conflict is greater the less the integration and solidarity within or between systems' (1957, 112). So conflict between sets of decision-making units is more severe than conflict within decision-making sets; and conflict within decision-making sets is more severe than within decision-making units.

These definitions and hypotheses are now applied to Kaplan's international systems, where they are found to be of great analytic use. In the balance of power system, for example, national actors, in line with the third hypothesis, insulate strongly: so alliances may be culturally defined as instrumental and may be readily changed. And actual or impending conflict (ninth hypothesis) characterized the balance of power system as a whole. The integrative role in the system was performed by the 'balancer'. Any national actor performing this role moved to prevent the formation of a preponderant alliance by swapping partners. However, the regulatory focus of each national system was self-maintenance, its effectiveness in this area being dependent on its structure. System dominant, non-directive national actors had of necessity to devote regulatory capacity to their own decision-making subsystem, and therefore had less capacity to deal with international disturbances.

In the case of the loose bipolar system, Kaplan applies, for example, hypotheses one, two, and six, and finds that the more decision-makers within bloc organizations communicate with other bloc decision-makers 'the less they communicate with national and subnational decision makers, the more the perception of the represented organization as deviant tends to increase' (1957, 118). But, referring to the third and seventh hypotheses, Kaplan finds that bloc organizations, as well as national actor organizations, 'tend to insulate their decision makers from considerations arising in universal actor organisations' (1957, 118). Communication between blocs is very limited so all the integrative hypotheses apply less strongly 'between blocs in the bipolar system than between national actors in the balance of power system' (1957, 118). Integrative roles in the loose bipolar international system, as indicated in the general outline of that system are occupied by universal actors and non-bloc national actors. And, applying the fifth hypothesis, it is suggested that the longer the universal organization remains in existence the more its integrative functions are likely to be reinforced.

Turning more particularly to the disintegrative process, Kaplan looks at the conditions minimizing solidarity and integration in the balance of power system, which, 'though it functioned successfully for several hundred years', has a number of features likely to trigger disintegrative activity. Among these are the relatively small number of essential actors in the system. This means that one wrong decision can have catastrophic results for a national actor. The example offered by Kaplan refers to the apparent intention of Britain and France to intervene in the Soviet-Finnish war in 1940: had they actually been able to do this they might well have brought the Soviet Union into the more general war on the side of Germany, which might have had the most radical results for Europe and the world. Because single actions can be so important it is likely that the regulatory capacity of the national actor will be devoted to individual tasks. Thus metatask capacity will diminish. Similarly, if the system has a large number of actors, scope for manoeuvre, for possible withdrawal from the system, for the erection of buffer zones and so on, will tend to reduce disintegrative effects. But the smaller the number of essential actors becomes the closer the system comes to a 'ruin' system. To protect itself the actor may be forced to resort to treachery and deceit. Good faith declines, suspicion becomes rampant. Interpreting the actions of other states becomes crucially important in the determination of policy. Yet information in this area may be difficult to obtain, and may be subject to very rapid change, depending, perhaps, on palace intrigue. Motives will also be difficult to calculate because each action is taken in a new context. Actions cannot fall into consistent patterns. So national actors must be prepared to act differently in each new situation. This variety demands both flexibility and regulatory capacity: which are therefore withdrawn from metatask functions. Such danger and uncertainty is likely to produce a number of personality disturbances, to which Kaplan devotes some attention.

The integrative process may be at work at the same time as the disintegrative process. Indeed, it is likely that conflict between national actors will coincide with greater integration within the national system. Kaplan concentrates on integration and disintegration in blocs, taking as specific examples NATO and the Korean Command. Here we shall simply refer briefly to his treatment of NATO, which is, in his terms, a non-hierarchical and non-directive supranational system of the bloc type. He is particularly concerned with the application of his hypotheses to the relations between the United States and NATO. Sentiments of solidarity, he suggests, attach

primarily to the military objectives of NATO, though the Supreme Commander is likely to be very much concerned with non-military factors. The degree of bloc integration will depend partly on the rapidity with which staff officers in NATO are rotated. The greater this rapidity the less likely are they to develop solidarity sentiments. High United States officials, however, operate within a communications network which makes for more participation in US planning than in NATO planning. Lower down in the Departments of State and Defence, even less NATO participation takes place. And within Congressional committees concerned in any way with military or foreign affairs, NATO solidarity ties are minimal. At these levels only a great and immediate practical need is likely to mobilize support for NATO. However, should a drastic emergency give NATO direct access to men and resources it would develop a well-integrated structure. And should the emergency be prolonged NATO would be transformed into a political system, with the possibility of stability and dominance over its subsystems.

The substantial remainder of Kaplan's contribution deals first with values and interests, and finally with problems of strategy from a games theory viewpoint. Here we are essentially concerned with systemic analysis, games theory and interests having been touched upon previously. It is also the case that the originality of Kaplan lies mainly in the first two sections of his book in their treatment of systems and systemic processes. Here an attempt has been made to convey the broad style and methodology of this treatment. In the context of the study of foreign policy it is clear that this treatment is of the greatest significance, indeed the emphasis Kaplan places on national actors is such that his treatment in many places can be taken as the analysis of foreign policy in differing international contexts. The Kaplan style has the great merit of concentrating the reader's attention on specific sets of international conditions with almost unexampled stringency. One might almost say that the greatest merit of the work lies in the intellectual exercise involved in working one's way through it. It claims heuristic status and certainly achieves much in this direction. It enlivens the mind to novel ways of categorizing and perceiving the phenomena of foreign policy and international relations, and in this way acts as a considerable stimulus in the intellectual task of coming to grips with the vast range of influences and events which Kaplan handles with such determination and thoroughness. At the same time the strict style of Kaplan's presentation exposes his own imperfections in a

thoroughly blunt fashion. He disarms some criticism of his more dogmatic formulations by urging the reader 'to regard them as initial hypotheses—in the absence of systematic evidence which could be convincing' (1957, 245). And he has admitted that his theory 'contains formulations that so far can be related to empirical systems only with great difficulty, primarily because appropriate empirical information has not yet been collected but also because the criteria for confirmation are inadequately developed' (1968).

Qualifications such as these do not invalidate some major criticisms. First, and most obviously, the critic must raise the question of the empirical status of Kaplan's systems. This is not to quibble too much about the exact applicability of these systems, but it is to query the kind of objective reality they are intended to refer to. It is not entirely clear whether the Kaplan models are intended to be comprehensive. Is the loose bipolar system, for example, intended to model a whole international system? This would seem to be the case. Yet to attempt such a task is to wander, in many senses, away from analysis towards the mere reflection of the concrete. Such a conclusion would seem to be substantiated by the many references to NATO, the United Nations, the Soviet Union, and suchlike, which intrude into the exposition of this system. It is a conclusion having depressing effects on Kaplan's model. In the first place, it would seem to rule out the possibility of two or more systems co-existing, since everything has somehow to be brought within the confines of one model. This ignores a promising use of systems analysis. The most important kind of movement in international relations in the Kaplan approach is its jump, or transformation, from one complete system to another complete system. Not merely is this analytically crude, it is empirically unsuggestive of the complexity of international politics. What sort of system encloses, for example, China and the Soviet Union? The Kaplan style would seem to suggest that whatever it is, it must be included in some larger system, perhaps as a dominant subsystem. In the nature of the case one cannot say that this is wrong. But one might suggest that it is clumsy, and makes the transformation problem entirely intractable. When does one whole system become another whole system? To answer this by fixing a point in time is to invite ridicule. Yet how can one whole system become another whole system gradually? What exists in the interim? In this connection, it is interesting to note that in the case of the most developed of Kaplan's systems, the balance of power system, the point of transformation is not pinned down,

though many interesting transformation factors are discussed. Did the balance of power system come to an end with the growth of bitter and implacable Franco-German hostility in the 1870s? Or was it still operating (to use another of Kaplan's balance of power illustrations) when it seemed that Britain and France might become directly involved in the Soviet-Finnish war in 1940? The absence of an actual or theoretical answer to this difficulty undermines the whole validity of the Kaplan approach, details apart, because of the many obvious distinctions between the international arena at such widely separated times.

Second, one cannot, however sympathetic, overlook the empirical details of Kaplan's exposition. For example, equating the United Nations with the universal actor in his loose bipolar system (1957, 118) cannot be allowed to pass in view of his rule that universal actors 'reduce the incompatibility between the blocs' (1957, 39). The area of Soviet-United States relations is virtually untouched by the UN. The incompatibility between these powers is largely handled by themselves. Empirical validity cannot be claimed for a system which would seem to propound empirical error. Again, in this vein, Kaplan is usually evasive on the question of time-scales. For example, his suggestion that the longer the universal organization remains in existence the more its integrative functions are likely to be reinforced, becomes, without a time-scale, little more than a familiarly pious statement of faith. And without a time-scale there is little possibility of verification, whatever new developments take place in the social sciences. Kaplan's references to the present imperfect state of knowledge and of criteria of empirical verification do not clothe with respectability many of his more starkly sweeping statements. For example, in his exposition of his classification of national actors (1957, 54-5), he classes Britain as relatively subsystem dominant, non-directive, and the United States as non-directive, system dominant. If one takes these categories as being so broad as to be virtually meaningless then little harm is done, except to the rigour and relevance of Kaplan's systemic processes. But if, as would seem to be Kaplan's intention, one takes them in any strict sense, then the issues raised are too formidable to be ignored. Cursory inspection of the literature on the British constitution, for example, will quickly reveal that men do not agree that it is subsystem dominant; not merely do they not agree now, but it seems very likely that they will never agree. One causative factor in this dissension is its ethical element: men do not agree as to what the British constitution should be like. A second causative factor is the extreme complexity and

changeability of the British constitution. Third, the nature of the British constitution depends partly on how men interpret it in practical terms at a particular time. So Kaplan's swift categorization of Britain is not merely intellectually arrogant, and blindly so, but also scientifically useless, because empirical observation can neither sustain nor destroy it. The same could be said for many concrete applications of his taxonomy. This again undermines the validity of his systems and their processes because they are, in many cases, intrinsically related to his conception of national actors. His designs seem to depend not on developing modes of empirical verification for their strength but upon a style of labelling to which empirical verification has little relevance.

A third line of criticism attaches to the closed nature of much of Kaplan's material. He makes his own definitions, his own systemic rules, his own process categories. The consistency of his approach derives substantially from the fact that consistency is built into the apparatus by its author. This is why so many of his systemic extensions are tautological. And this is why the problem of empirical verification should not be shrugged off too lightly, nor too readily referred to future generations of social scientists. Without clear verification, Kaplan's framework becomes metaphysical because it is self-defining. This is not to say that it is not impressive or illuminating. It is to suggest that its value would seem to be of such an intellectualized nature as to place it outside the tradition of empirical science. This would not be worrying if Kaplan did not take such pains to make his presentation seem scientific. Yet one may still enjoy Kaplan, so long as one does not allow oneself to become troubled by the convention of American political studies which dictates that rigorous thinking has to show itself to be allied to natural science before its validity can be conceded.

Fourth, we come to the question of prescription. Here Kaplan is plain and to the point: 'The theory may be viewed as prescriptive. Its essential rules prescribe behaviour believed to be optimal under the conditions asserted' (1957, new preface). A number of problems are raised by this endorsement of prescriptive implications. In the first place, it makes Kaplan a theorist of clearly conservative bent. By his own terms, his models have equilibrium conditions built into them. So his essential rules must be conservative rules. Those obeying them act to preserve the system in question. For example, if states had had available to them the Kaplan balance of power rules, and if they had obeyed them, then the balance of power would have continued indefinitely. Optimal behaviour is system-maintaining. Two

further problems are created by this position. First, that the system in question may not be morally acceptable, in which case the use of the term 'optimal' becomes suspect. The actual balance of power treatment of colonies and minor powers, for example, in fact became unacceptable on moral grounds among liberals and others during the late nineteenth century. Kaplan can always avoid this difficulty by excluding matters of this kind from his model; but in this case his model can no longer claim any kind of actual applicability and his rules become purely scholastic. Second, the qualification 'conditions asserted' implies a degree of clarity in Kaplan's models which even they do not achieve, as we have seen. They can hardly prescribe if it is difficult to make out, in empirical terms, what they are saying. Asserted conditions should, ideally, be crystal clear. This difficulty apart, there are conditions which one can think of, about which Kaplan says little. For example, the conditions and rules of his balance of power system say very little about the relative power of national actors; it would appear that great increases of strength, unevenly distributed among actors, would upset the system (which is, of course, one interpretation of the failure of the actual balance of power). About this condition Kaplan is relatively silent. But how could he be otherwise? How could he precisely indicate when the distribution of strength among national actors transgresses his conditions? One problem, apart from actual resource measurement, is that the maldistribution of strength becomes dangerous when actors feel it to be so, and this emotional condition evades exact specification. Difficulties of these kinds simply add force to the criticisms already raised. Prescription in terms of a closed system having no definite contact with actuality cannot be prescription in any acceptable sense of the term. Prescribing for actors in an imagined world is meaningless, because such figments will always do what one wishes them to do. For prescription to have meaning there must be a possibility of independence. So the status of Kaplan's prescriptions depend upon a synthesis of actuality and his systems. But it is in just this area that he is evasive; and it is in just this area, it has been argued here, that his systems are sometimes at their weakest.

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10

Projections

The arena of foreign policy does not present a spectacle altogether conducive to a psychological condition of contemplative passivity. More commonly the immense dangers and recurrent horrors of the life of states is likely to produce a sense of moral outrage at the depths to which the state system seems to reduce men. This essay will not deal with the numerous utopian schemes which have been framed in the hope of making the world both a sane and safe place in which to live. Reforms of this kind, propounding, as a rule, some conception of world government, are often so sweeping as to lie beyond the realms of the activity of politics. They often contain no practical suggestions for foreign policy in the actual and intractable field of public affairs. And their analysis is commonly so concerned with the difference between what is manifestly imperfect and what should be perfect, that the relatively mundane problems involved in negotiating this vast gap are neglected. In other words politics is ignored. It would seem that either states make the great leap to a creative self-destruction in a higher form of world organization or they remain in their present condition, awaiting an inevitable end of an altogether more sordid kind. The conception of a leap to world government is not merely impractical, it is also intellectually unsound. Not all states would, or could, leap at the same time. If one powerful state leapt, while one powerful state held back, the interim period would be one of intense danger for relatively unprotected populations. Again, the leap to world government requires the confidence of complete trust among nations. But if

there is complete trust among nations world government becomes unnecessary. On another level, a world government, with massive powers of enforcement, would experience few barriers on the road to world tyranny. In contrast, the state system, for all its obvious imperfections, contains a number of restraints upon states; and these states, limited in their international pursuits, are not uniformly tyrannical within their own territories.

These difficulties do not invalidate a moral response to the problems of world society, but they do, one might suggest, invalidate such a response when its fervour is such as to lead those in its grip to ignore the longstanding existence of states and the immediate practical problems surrounding them. Fortunately, concern with practical matters and with the moral urge to reform the state system and the nature of foreign policy are not mutually exclusive. This chapter is briefly concerned with a large, and somewhat ill-defined, school of thought which sees in a particular kind of response to practical problems a way out of the dangerous emotional morass into which states may seem to have led men. This is the functional school, which, in the present context, is not to be confused with functional analysis as a response to some of the more intellectual problems of the social sciences. Though primarily associated with the names of Woolf and Mitrany, international functionalism has no authoritative text; indeed, its empirical nature militates against clear theoretical statement. Additionally, functionalism takes new forms as the times require. So here we shall merely be concerned with suggesting same general lines of functionist thinking. Functionalism is directed towards the achievement of world peace. As such it is a critique of foreign policy as the expression of the power of states, and it is a critique of states themselves, which so often seem to lead men to war and which are increasingly inefficient in ministering to fundamental human welfare needs. Functionalism does not suggest organizing states in such a way as to prevent their natural conflict bursting into open warfare; it is more concerned with organizing where mutual needs exist and where efficient response to human requirements is inherently cross-national. This is the sense in which Mitrany advocates a 'working peace system' rather than some essentially political arrangement whose basic elements, for obvious practical reasons, must be states, with all their apparently futile historical enmities. International functionalism is concerned with sidestepping the state in cross-national projects. It views the world's population as a world society whose needs should

be properly met by functional organizations specific to those needs. Thus, for example, many of the problems associated with disease, which itself is no respecter of national boundaries, are most properly dealt with by specialist organizations, leaning heavily on the work of experts working on a cross-national, or non-national, basis. Moving ahead on many fronts functional organizations gradually supplant states as the providers of the conditions of human welfare. As this process continues the loyalties now attaching harmfully to states are transferred to the organizations which are manifestly doing far more to improve the conditions of men, regardless of questions of nationality. In this way sovereignty is transferred in slices to international organizations which acquire the authority to make rules in the areas of their specialist concerns. So, bit by bit, the state is emptied of power and authority and world government becomes a reality, though the exact way in which this finally occurs cannot, and should not, be predicted, for the process works in empirical stages in response to specific needs.

International functionalism is, then, strictly empirical in its suggestions. It is also substantially based on empirical observation. It has long been realized, for example, that the only way rationally to organize traffic on rivers passing through and between a variety of states is by means of international institutions of some kind; that the efficient delivery of international mail requires international co-operation; that radio wavelengths are best allocated in an international setting if radio communications are not to become chaotic; that locusts, diseases, and all manner of pestilences pay scant regard to border regulations. Similarly, there is nothing novel, or in any way remarkable, in the suggestion that in areas such as these traditional diplomats, and traditional diplomacy, have little to offer. Functional organizations, of a modest kind, had become a minor feature of international affairs in the nineteenth century, long before functionalism was transformed into the major international projection it has become under the influence of Woolf, Mitrany, and many others. So functionalism was based on observation; and it was not devoid of an ultimate vision of world government; but it was predominantly concerned with recommendation in existing circumstances. Peacemaking should be largely concentrated on the practical social problems of public health, labour conditions, unemployment, international economic depressions and suchlike. Organizations in these functional areas were to be concrete steps to world peace, both in the sense that they would remove the economic and social causes

of war and in the sense that they would cumulatively undermine the notion of state sovereignty. In fact peacemaking in the context of both world wars was substantially directed towards the establishment of numbers of functional organizations, partly under the influence of functionalist thinking and partly in response to felt practical demands. And in more recent decades the movement towards west European integration has provided and suggested further, complicated, parts in the functionalist canon. The vast proliferation of functional organizations in international relations is eloquent testimony to the firmly empirical status of much functionalist thinking; and the importance which governments, if not peoples, ascribe to such organizations gives some substance to functionalist projections.

In what might tentatively be called its classic form international functionalism can be reduced to a number of fairly simple propositions (see Haas, 1964, 47-50; Taylor, 1968, 396-406). It is suggested, partly on direct empirical grounds, that narrow, functionally-specific forms of international co-operation, divorced from the full panoply of foreign policy, are relatively well placed to succeed in their purposes. In this sense, the World Health Organization, for example is more 'successful' than the United Nations as a whole. So international efforts of a functional kind are the most likely, and intrinsically the most appropriate way of maximizing welfare. Narrow organizational structures with functional duties, powers, and, if possible, representation, are more integrative than more directly 'political' forms of organization, in the sense that they are more likely to grow in importance and coherence as they tackle their specific tasks. They develop their own norms and procedures, their own styles of cross-national conduct. Involvement in one such institution is likely to engender an outlook which will come to see the need for further similar institutions to perform further functions and to satisfy new needs. The extension of this process has the effect of gradually reducing the role of politics in world society. Similarly, the role of diplomacy is gradually supplanted by the activities of sets of task-oriented technical experts. Those directly involved in such institutions find their loyalities moving away from nation-states. More importantly, because functional institutions will be seen to serve and satisfy the more important specific human needs, then states will lose their emotive status and men will 'learn' to live in positive, working international harmony, and will attach themselves to the institutions which make this possible.

Functionalism is clearly open to substantial criticism. Its view of

the ills of world society is by no means convincing. The suggestion that wars are caused by states and by social and economic ills, though popular, is more than a little crude. It is not observable that relatively wealthy parts of the world are less prone to become involved in inter-state wars than relatively poor parts of the world. A comparison of Europe and South America would seem to suggest the opposite. Nor, on the other hand, can it be consistently held that men prefer to improve their economic and social conditions than to go to war. Poverty in the Middle East, for example, does not seem to divert large popular sentiments of hostility in that region to functional projects. And to suggest that war is the prerogative of states is to be blinded to facts by moral conviction. Killing, of one kind or another, would seem to be as popular a pursuit within states as between states. To observe that states become engaged in wars has no logical connection with the conclusion that states cause wars. Policy plays at least some part. Sweden has become involved in wars in modern times rather more rarely than has Germany. They are both states. But their policies differ. And the reasons for these differences are vast and complicated, ranging from questions to do with social structure and political leadership, to questions touching on climate and geographical position. To say that policy causes war is far more subtle, and perhaps convincing, than to say that states cause war. But one result of this viewpoint is that the matter of statehood becomes secondary to the bewilderingly complex problems raised in attempting to explain the nature and causes of policies which lead to war. An adherence to the cause of destroying the state ignores all the underlying influences which control the policies of states. It also ignores the fact that not all states are always warlike, and that no state is warlike all the time.

Similarly, the view that the mechanisms of the state are inadequate to the provision of peace and welfare for their populations cannot be very closely related to empirical observation. Many states have succeeded in protecting their citizens from external attack. At a different level, it is fundamental to much political theory that the primary purpose of the state is the provision of internal law and order, and the necessary conditions of internal law and order, among its citizens. Many states are fairly successful in this task. Given the wide range of tensions likely to promote internal disturbance, there is no reason to believe that international agencies, acting on a universal scale, would be more successful than states in this area; and in the absence of the strong positive allegiance and identification

which states often attract, they might be very much less successful than states. This is not to suggest that international agencies are useless when states break down: this is far from being so. But the fact of the breakdown of a few states does not recommend the supercession of all states, many of which show relatively few signs of collapse. The superiority of the state in the matter of civil order is evidenced by the fact that much international action in this matter has the overt purpose of restoring the structure of the state or in some other way assisting it in coming to grips with its tasks. In the case of welfare, it is again far from generally being true that states are inadequate in supplying the needs of their citizens. Other questions apart, it would seem likely that the state is far better placed to mobilize the necessary support for such efforts than are international organizations. This is not to suggest that some states, even all states, could not be more active in this area; but inactivity is not necessarily evidence of incapacity. It is more probably evidence of unsympathetic political circumstances, which international agencies could do little to change in a manner appropriate to the relevant societies. This is not to say that functional organization is useless. This would clearly be absurd. But it is evidently the case that many functional organizations, whatever their internal structure, work with, and depend upon, states, and are in no conceivable position to take over states. And where international agencies attempt to act upon social structures they almost invariably do so with the assistance of state mechanisms. It is clearly the case that international organizations can, and do, assist states in what might generally be called their welfare functions—increasing public investment, raising national income, and the like. But the vitally important functions of, say, the IMF, GATT, the World Bank, and suchlike, are performed for, with, and through states. If there were no states these organizations could hardly exist.

In this kind of way functionalism often overlooks many fundamental difficulties of international organization without the state. How could the mechanisms of the state continue without the state? And how could the fantastic variety of functional organizations be woven together to make the fabric of a single world state? It is also the case that functionalism often idealizes the work of functional organizations. They are by no means models of efficiency and reasonableness, to be contrasted with the sordid, emotional, and clumsy animal which seems, in this view, to be the state. It can reasonably be held, for example, that agricultural policy within the

context of EEC has been far from efficient and rational. Similarly, the view that functional organization somehow soothes social and international tensions is far from realistic. Tensions among European agricultural workers may well have been increased by the activities of EEC. And free movement of labour can activate social neuroses of a particularly extreme kind, which, so far anyway, only the state can hope to control and assuage. The notion that states can somehow lose themselves in functional organizations also owes more to wishful thinking than to observation. Institutions such as the IMF are not merely used by states, it is clearly intended that this should be so. Moving into more troubled waters, it is an orthodox criticism of French foreign policy, for example, that it attempts, and in many senses succeeds, in using the EEC to further its own ends. This view could, without difficulty, be extended to other EEC members, actual and potential. It would be entirely remarkable if states did not incorporate large and important structures such as EEC or the IMF into the mechanisms and purposes of their foreign policies. It would be odd to see this as somehow a bad thing. If international co-operation is regarded as desirable the reverse view must be taken. But this procedure does not sidestep foreign policy and the state, as functionalism would seem to recommend.

It is also the case that functionalism tends to idealize the role of the expert. Other questions apart, it is rarely the case in any functional organization that an expert is permitted to step out of his executive place and undermine the foreign policy or the structure of a state. When this seems likely to happen states tend to react in a vigorous fashion. Additionally, it is something of an idealization to imagine that an expert is somehow free from the contagion of politics and political attitudes. Indeed, an addiction to functionalism would be regarded as a political attitude in many quarters. Experts in many fields, regardless of their desires in the matter, must encounter politics. An expert in transport must encounter, even have views on, transport policy and its administration. Policy questions can seldom be wholly technical because they usually require a mobilization of public support and resources, and, by definition, this is almost always a political matter, intrinsically connected with the fabric of the political system. Nor is expert knowledge always distinct from political awareness: the impact of ideology on the study of genetics in the Soviet Union is a notorious example of the contrary case. And to place experts in a more peace-creating role than diplomats is, it can be argued, to mistake the nature of diplomacy.

To blame wars on diplomats is similar to blaming disease on doctors. A diplomat is, or should be, an expert in maintaining diplomatic relations and in conducting negotiations between states. Not only has this form of expert activity contributed to the foundation of large numbers of functional organizations, it would be to ignore history to fail to point out that it has also probably contributed to the avoidance of a number of wars. The notion that diplomacy is a destructive activity does not merit examination. Diplomacy is clearly related to the notion of the state, but even this cannot be taken to imply that the diplomat is exclusively concerned with the interests, narrowly defined, of his own state. The diplomat can be loyal not merely to his own state but also to diplomacy. That the diplomat's position is often a difficult one is undeniable; that it is somehow harmful is unsupportable.

The process of 'learning' to which functionalism appears to attach much importance is not free from ambiguity. Do states, peoples, or experts learn? And what exactly do they learn about? Experts can only learn what they already know: that in some areas their efforts are best applied in a cross-national way. States can only learn to become confirmed in the view that led them to become involved with international functional activity, that in some areas international co-operation can be most helpful to states in many of their technical and welfare pursuits. Peoples, in the functionalist view, should learn to attach their emotions to international organizations in preference to the state. This projection raises many difficulties. If states were reduced to empty shells, the international institutions resting upon them would in many cases collapse. If the transfer of emotional affect took place on a bit-by-bit basis the outcome could be disastrous: if, for example, EEC were to become a unitary state the number of states in Europe would be reduced, but the causes of peace and welfare, in Europe and the world, would not necessarily be served by the creation of another super-power. And if EEC were to become a federal state the total of human well-being would not necessarily be increased, because the experience of federations is substantially one of tension, collapse, and civil strife. Outcomes of this kind apart, the suggestion that large-scale human emotions akin to nationalism could be brought to attach themselves to bodies such as the IMF, ILO, GATT and large numbers of others of greater obscurity, is so far-fetched as to invite comic treatment.

One of the greatest difficulties of functionalism as recommendation, as Taylor points out (1968, 407), lies in the location of the groups

or bodies upon which prescription is urged. Presumably professional groups are already inclined to develop international contacts. Business corporations motivated by profit will attempt to penetrate any worthwhile market that is available and will organize themselves on a cross-national basis if this should seem necessary, as it often does. Groups with specific purposes, such as trade unions, will pursue those purposes by the best means available, and where international organizations exist, or can be created, to assist such endeavours, little in the way of prescription is necessary. The nature of functionalist recommendation in its intended impact on statesmen is somewhat ambiguous. They must be urged to encourage cross-national functional groupings of all kinds, and the states which they represent must make full use of all the practical services functional organizations are able to provide. But the purpose of this kind of activity must be somehow concealed from them. Statesmen must be inveigled into destroying statecraft. This puts an unusually low value on the intelligence of statesmen. It also sets a low value on statecraft, which it is unreasonable to view as a constant form of wickedness. Statecraft can recognize its own limitations. These limitations are not only those of the mechanisms of the state in confronting large-scale technical problems; there are also the limitations imposed by the massive social forces of which the state is the symbol, the victim, and, in some cases, the hopeful guide.

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11

A conclusion

It would be folly to believe that there is a single key to the understanding of foreign policy. There is no threshold. There is no door. This essay has touched on a number of imperfect approaches to imperfect understandings. Each approach is partially distinctive in method and in the kinds of insights and recommendations it contributes, and each is also partially distinctive in the errors and inconsistencies it contains and engenders. Each can be seen as offering a position available for occupation by partisans hotly contending the validity of the efforts of other partisans elsewhere established. But used thus, an approach to an understanding becomes embattled, self-absorbed, unyielding, immobile, and, ultimately, an obstacle to any kind of understanding. So this conclusion is not a summing up but a sort of plea. The truth about foreign policy is a matter of variety, of the conjunctions of imperfect understandings, of the determined suspicion of doctrinaire assertions, of adjustment to constant change. Human activity in the formulation and execution of foreign policies is as complex as the men, forces, perceptions, beliefs and arguments involved. An understanding of this complexity is a part of it. It follows that a complete understanding, or an adherence to a single path to what may be conceived to be a complete understanding, must be a dogmatic distortion, absurd if isolated, possibly dangerous if not. Whatever understanding is, this cannot be it. The explanation of foreign policy is as continuous a process as the making of it. No approach excludes another simply because its standpoint and methods differ. The reverse is so. It is diversity, the criticisms, conflicts, and resolutions it contains, which makes understanding a process, and thus makes it real.

Index